

IN PRAISE OF LAUDANUM ■ FAIR TRADE MAKES A COMEBACK

MARCH 29, 2004

# The American Conservative

## The Next Emperor

By Christopher Layne



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## BETTER LATE ...

I really must protest. There was a time when I could read an essay by a known, self-confessed conservative and walk away to wash my hands feeling that the poor sap knew no better but might one day learn the error of his ways. Now I find that Pat Buchanan keeps on saying things that I not only agree with from top to bottom but have mumbled to myself, in an incoherent sort of a way, every day for the last two years.

Once, I would cheerfully have assumed that a Buchanan presidency would have been worse than almost any other of recent times, on a par with an administration led by the late Barry Goldwater. More fool me—and my apologies to Mr. Buchanan. It turns out that the great man was fooling with me all those years and was saving up his best stuff for his late period and *The American Conservative*. He not only writes beautifully, what he says makes perfect sense.

I do not regard myself as a conservative, and I am certainly not an American. (I am an ex-Fleet-Street journalist.) But I say, Give 'em hell, Pat! The neocons are the opposite of idiot-savants; they are, I suppose, savant-idiot: in other words, they are educated and appear to know what they are talking about, yet their message to America is dangerous drivel.

WALTER ELLIS

*East Haddam, Conn.*

## GOOD COMPANY

Pat Buchanan's "No End to War" (March 1) was worth an entire year's subscription. There is so much simple wisdom and common sense here and such fine writing that I can only admire and celebrate—and renew my subscription.

I have never considered myself a conservative. But now, with this gang trying to rewrite the Constitution, disassemble the Bill of Rights, take over foreign policy and ride America into empire, I'm being driven grudgingly and angrily

towards conservatism. It is not where I wanted to go, but reading this piece gives me new hope. I feel I'm coming into good company.

JOHN D. FLANAGAN

*via e-mail*

## SCARE THEM STRAIGHT

Mr. Buchanan's article (March 1) implies that the Iraq War was a neocon invention and not necessary. But strategically, it was necessary. It said to the power-brokers in the Mideast that if they continued to support Islamists either directly or by looking the other way, we would systematically attack each of their countries until terrorism against us stops.

And it has stopped. Who is giving us the specific intelligence about the British flights to Washington and Saudi Arabia that keep getting cancelled? The Saudis? The Iranian mullahs? Musharraf? Somebody who has penetrated al-Qaeda clearly is giving us this information. And why? So we don't invade anybody else over in their neck of the woods. And why did Libya cave? Again, because of our strategic war on Iraq.

So I am not sure some of the points in this article will stand up historically. Bush and Blair's "strategy" will stand the test of time, just as our operation of surrounding the Soviet Union with military bases in the 1950s was a strategy that worked to keep them from expanding and is now considered a brilliant move.

BOB FRANKS

*Beacon N.Y.*

## BLACK-INK CONSERVATIVE

I was raised a conservative, but today I am troubled because our deficit under this "conservative" administration is soaring. There is no conservative tenet that I cling to more than the notion that the American individual knows how to

spend his hard-earned dollar better than anyone else. Yet this administration has increased the national deficit more than 24 percent ("Spending Like a Drunken Democrat," Feb. 16). Where is the fiscal conservatism?

As a young conservative, I came of political age during the Clinton administration and do not want to experience again the moral degradation of those eight years. But while the moral integrity of the White House has been restored, the true conservative agenda has taken a serious blow. Who am I supposed to vote for? I want a fiscal conservative, not what am I left with.

KEVIN ANDERSON

*Austin, Texas*

## DOWN TO EARTH

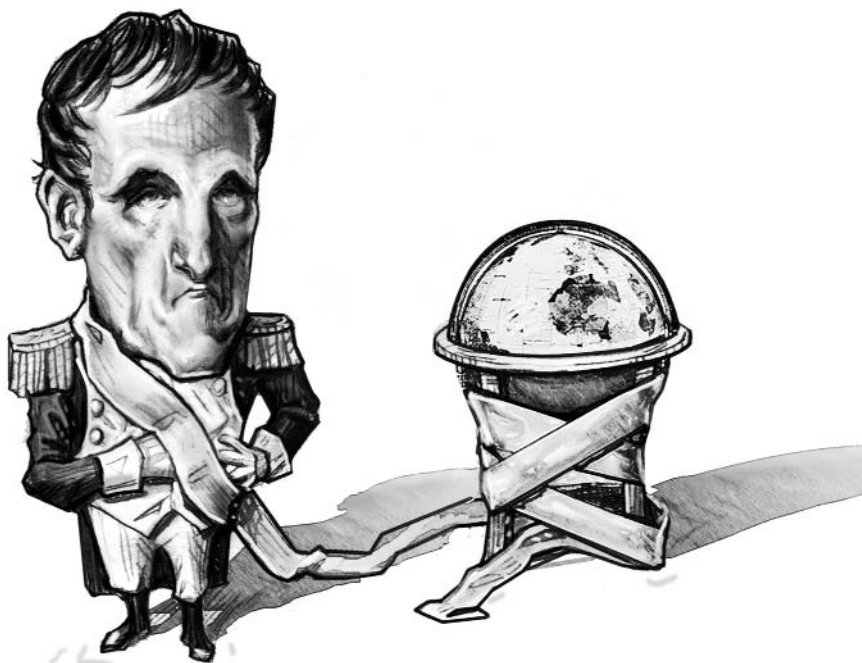
Martin Sieff's article (March 1) made good points about George W.'s space plan. As a baby-boomer kid who loved every minute of space mission TV coverage, it was sad to hear of the decline of the American space program.

Scientists say that if you can just get into Earth orbit safely and cheaply, then the bound into the rest of the universe is a relative cakewalk. But sadly, "safely and cheaply" has been an elusive goal. The solution of that problem is even more of a Holy Grail to us moderns than the problem of the longitude was to 18th-century mariners. Maybe we should leave as much of space exploration as possible to the robots for now and concentrate more on the challenge of orbital insertion—and leave that to the private sector.

J. WROBLEWSKI

*Vancouver, British Columbia*

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CHRIS HIERS

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[CULTURE]

## WEDDED MISS

Frank Sinatra famously crooned that love and marriage “go together like a horse and carriage.” But, apologies to fairy tales, affection has never been the historic arbiter of human organization. If it were, a man might wed his barcalounger. And indeed, he may soon be able to. The furor over gay marriage, ignited by the Massachusetts Supreme Court and stoked by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom’s decision to start issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, aims less at expanding marriage than undoing it.

A single person cannot enjoy the social esteem of matrimony, and a polygamist cannot codify his love. The traditional understanding of marriage makes no room, not because it regards either as inestimable or unlovable, but because that is not its purpose. Marriage is more than a public seal of approval: it is the formalized protection of a potentially procreative bond. It is this essential element—not devotion or fidelity or hospital visitation—that elevates the complementary union of a man and a woman. To define marriage otherwise voids its meaning.

This is exactly what activists intend. President Bush has answered with the radical remedy of a constitutional amendment, a move conservatives readily embrace in their revulsion to the alternative. But this election-year valentine comes freighted with baggage: it obscures more pressing issues, muffles a caucus rightly incensed by the president’s social moderation, and raises grave concerns about allowing judicial caprice to effect the amendment of our founding documents.

In a curious role reversal, the Left has taken up states’ rights refrains while conservatives, amnesic of their arguments against the ERA, now grasp at federal solutions. But four Boston



judges and a maverick mayor have no license to topple an ancient landmark then force our democracy to honor their whim—or alter our Constitution to resist it. The Defense of Marriage Act, passed by Congress and signed by Clinton, quarantines states’ wrongs, leaving this battle to their own legislatures. Messy, but no more so than rewriting our charter.

Sixty percent of Americans oppose gay marriage. Many more probably feel that vague unease of shifting foundations and wish this fight had never been scheduled. Count us among them: firm traditionalists but reluctant warriors in a battle forced upon us.

[POLITICS]

## COKE AND PEPSI

Shortly after Ralph Nader announced his candidacy, National Public Radio asked Pat Buchanan for comment.

**NPR:** Are the Democrats right to be worried about a Nader candidacy?

**PJB:** In my judgment, a presidential election is about offering the American people a range of choices. John Kerry, the putative nominee of the Democratic Party, voted for the war in Iraq. He voted

for the Patriot Act, voted for No Child Left Behind. He voted for NAFTA. He voted for most favored nation treatment for Communist China. Many of these policies have backfired, and the American people want to know how and why we got into some of the problems we got into.

Ralph Nader is a distinct voice ... who offers a different perspective, who will bring other people out, who articulates views that many of us—and not all of them; I don’t agree with Ralph on social issues at all—that we don’t hear in presidential elections. What many of us feel is that this democracy is a faux democracy. It is really one in which we are told, “The Democratic Party will offer you Coke and the Republican Party will offer you Pepsi, and there are to be no other choices,” that all the votes somehow belong to these two parties, and anyone who challenges from outside and gains votes has somehow stolen them. ... Any votes Ralph Nader gets are votes he earns and wins. I’m delighted he’s in this race and making this case. I understand the Constitution Party has a candidate. The Libertarians have run candidates repeatedly. They may have a utopian

position, but I think the more in these elections, the better.

**NPR:** Is Nader right that he can pick up some disgruntled conservative Republicans there?

**PJB:** ... [M]ost of them that he picks up I think will be the type of voter whose heart is probably broken because Howard Dean's campaign imploded. ... I don't think he's going to draw off what otherwise might have gone to the Republicans. I do think this: when Ross Perot got into the race in 1992, he increased the turnout dramatically... that was a healthy development. ... [I]n my judgment, presidential campaigns are obviously about winning power, but they're also an extraordinary teaching opportunity. ... You know, Archimedes said, "Give me a lever and a place to stand, and I will move the world." ... Ralph is looking for that place right now, and I think his whole career, whether you would agree with it or not, is heavily weighted toward idealism, and no one can tell me John Kerry's career is marked by idealism.

[POSTWAR]

## SITTING PRETTY

Iraq may look like a bloody and costly quagmire to many Americans—especially after reports of Saddam's dangerous arsenal proved fanciful. But all is well according to Ahmad Chalabi, whose Iraqi National Congress was the source of much of the false intelligence. The Iraqi kingpin and favorite Arab of the AEI bombardiers has no regrets about his role in leading Washington to war. "As far as we're concerned we've been entirely successful. The tyrant Saddam is gone and the Americans are in Baghdad. What was said before is not important." And why should Chalabi have regrets? He's the dominant figure in the new Iraqi governing council. And money continues to roll in: the INC's "Information Collection Program"

receives between \$3 and 4 million a year from the Pentagon. And why shouldn't Chalabi be well paid? If Rumsfeld's shop wants a pretext to launch another war, "intelligence" of the sort provided by Chalabi will surely be needed.

[ECONOMICS]

## NO AMERICANS NEED APPLY

Under assault from his Democratic rivals for the 2.2 million jobs lost under his watch, President Bush can finally point to some solid job-creation numbers. Unfortunately for him, not all of these new workers will be eligible to vote in this election.

A study by the Pew Hispanic Center found that the number of employed Latinos climbed by nearly 660,000 between the fourth quarter of 2002 and the fourth quarter of 2003, outstripping the net increase of 371,066 jobs for the non-Hispanic work force. According to the Pew report, the biggest gains were among Hispanics who came to the United States after 2000. More than half the new jobs were in construction while most of the rest were in low-wage, low-skill sectors requiring minimal English proficiency.

Harry Holzer, a professor of public policy at George Washington University, explained it to Knight Ridder this way: "It is a form of discrimination, in a way, in favor of the foreign born workers." He argued that employers like to hire "more appreciative and less demanding" immigrants.

This fits well with the logic behind the president's guest-worker proposal, which would make it easier for businesses to replace American workers with cheap imported labor. The Democrats contend that the "jobless recovery" proves the Bush administration's policies are not working. But perhaps the reality is, at least as far as open borders are concerned, they are working too well for his own good. ■

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# Free-Market Molotov

Like aspirin for a headache or a Bloody Mary for a hang-over, there is a patented Republican supply-side prescription for progress in emerging nations: the cocktail

of democracy and free markets.

If only we plant both in Mesopotamia, runs the argument, Iraqis will give up their old ways to become friends of America and partners in the Global Economy. This is the thinking behind the U.S. effort to recreate Iraq in our own image and the Bush commitment to “world democratic revolution.”

But is the hope misplaced? Is there a possibility, or a probability, that a sudden introduction of democracy in Iraq will rather ignite a bloody struggle for power and wealth by Iraq’s dispossessed majority?

That is exactly what we may expect, writes Yale professor Amy Chua, author of *World on Fire: How Exporting Free-Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*. The professor stands on the rock-hard ground of 20th century history.

During the 1980s and 1990s, when General Suharto introduced free-market reforms in Indonesia, the Chinese, 3 percent of the population, took control of 70 percent of the private economy. Every billionaire was Chinese. And when the people of Indonesia “ousted General Suharto in 1998, the poor majority rose up against the Chinese minority and against markets.”

Writes Chua: “The democratic elections that abruptly followed 30 years of autocratic rule were rife with ethnic scape-goating by indigenous politicians and calls for the confiscation of Chinese wealth.”

“In May 1998, Indonesian mobs swarmed through the streets of Jakarta, looting and torching more than 5,000

ethnic Chinese shops and homes. A hundred and fifty Chinese women were gang-raped and more than 2,000 people died. In the months that followed, anti-Chinese hate-mongering and violence spread throughout Indonesia’s cities. The explosion of rage can be traced to an unlikely source: the unrestrained combination of democracy and free markets.”

In the developing world, writes Professor Chua, there are larger masses of poor than in the West. In these countries there are often found “market-dominant minorities,” i.e., small racial, ethnic, or religious groups whose economic success makes them objects of a seething envy.

A sudden introduction of democracy will invite demagogues seeking power to appeal to the resentment and hatred of the tiny ethnic group by promising to confiscate its goods and property.

This has happened to the “overseas Chinese” in Indonesia and the Philippines and to the Indians of East Africa. The Hutu massacres of the Tutsis are traceable to the economic success of the latter under colonialism and the sudden introduction of popular-populist rule in the 1990s.

In Zimbabwe, “Comrade Bob” Mugabe maintains his hold on power with his anti-white demagoguery and seizures of the land of white farmers, a tiny minority that produces most of the nation’s cash crops for export.

The same has begun to happen in South Africa. In Bolivia and Ecuador, populists have taken power by pandering to the Amerindian resentment of “pro-gringo” and pro-market leaders.

Chua believes that one reason

Russia’s President Putin has attacked and dispossessed the oligarchs Boris Berezovsky, Vladimir Gusinsky, and Mikhail Khodorkovsky is that they are Jewish, and there is a well of anti-Semitism among Russia’s newly destitute. The more one reflects on Chua’s examples, the more her point seems obvious.

In our own urban riots in the 1960s, small shopkeepers put up “black-owned” signs in their windows to prevent arson and looting. In the Los Angeles riots of 1992, Hispanic illegals joined attacks on Koreans. In “Do the Right Thing” by Spike Lee, there are scenes of unemployed black men grumbling contempt at the Korean grocer.

Professor Chua believes an analogous dynamic is playing out in the world. Many people of color now see whites as an exploitative “market-dominant minority,” one-sixth of the world’s population possessing two-thirds of its wealth. Thus the rage and resentment directed at America at that UN conference on racism in South Africa in 2001.

Today, Chua warns about a too rapid introduction of one-person, one-vote democracy and free markets in Iraq. There the Shi’ites, 60 percent of the population, see themselves as not only having been persecuted for their faith but also denied their fair share of Iraq’s wealth.

Given political power, Professor Chua suggests, they may demand a massive redistribution of that wealth. And if they have taken power democratically, who and what will deny them? Already, the Kurds are claiming Kirkuk and its oil wealth as theirs by right.

As for the world at large, if Chua is right, those who are advancing the cause of a world government of one-nation, one vote, or one-person, one vote, are advancing the Suicide of the West. ■

[a dime's difference]

# The Next Emperor

Kerry sketches an imperial foreign policy scarcely different from Bush's.

**By Christopher Layne**

AS THE YEAR BEGAN, the *Economist* editorialized that the 2004 presidential campaign would provoke a wide-ranging debate not only about the direction of American foreign policy, but also about the fundamental assumptions upon which that policy is based. The Democrats disagree with the Bush administration on foreign-policy specifics, and in an election year they will play up these differences in order to distinguish their product from the administration's. But at the end of the day, there is not going to be any re-examination of basic foreign-policy predicates during this campaign because Democrats and Republicans share a common vision of America's world role.

This is not to say that there will not be fireworks. After all, when it comes to the Bush administration's foreign policy there certainly is much to criticize—especially with respect to Iraq. We now know—and should have known a year ago—that Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction and posed neither an imminent nor a “grave and gathering” threat to the United States. We now know—contrary to repeated intimations by senior administration officials, including President

Bush and Vice President Cheney—that there was no alliance between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein and that Baghdad had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks. We now know that, at the least, there was a colossal failure by the U.S. intelligence community during the run-up to the Iraq War. And we now have reason to believe that the administration deliberately misled the American public about the nature of the Iraqi threat to provide a pretext for a policy decision—bringing about a regime change in Baghdad—that was made well before 9/11. We now know that the administration plunged into war without giving any real consideration to how it would win the peace in a postwar Iraq. And we now know that the administration's sledgehammer diplomacy opened a serious rift in U.S. relations with key allies, especially in Europe.

What we do not yet know is whether the administration will succeed in its goal of democratizing Iraq and the Middle East. But we do know that the odds don't look good—certainly not in Iraq, which is supposed to be the catalyst for a region-wide “democratic transformation.” Armed resistance to the U.S.

occupation continues. Sectarian and ethnic strife boils. Each passing day brings news of more obstacles frustrating Washington's attempts to hand over power to a “sovereign” Iraqi government. A fragmented Iraq, wracked by civil war, is still a lot more likely than a democratic Iraq.

It seems, therefore, that there is ample ammunition for the Democrats to challenge Bush's foreign-policy stewardship. But questions immediately arise: What is the basis of Democratic critiques of the administration's foreign policy? How valid are they? And if Bush is defeated in November, how much would a Democratic administration's foreign policy differ from the current administration's, and in what ways?

Of the serious Democratic contenders, only John Kerry made foreign policy a major focus his campaign. But his critique of the Bush administration's Iraq policy is distinctly cautious. Kerry's beef is not with the administration's decision to go to war, per se, but rather with its conduct in the run-up to the war and with the postwar occupation. In a word, the Democratic critique is “multilateralism.” That is, by plunging into



war without securing broad international backing and support, the administration condemned the U.S. to paying—in blood and dollars—the full cost of the war and to bearing, almost single-handedly, the burden of rebuilding postwar Iraq.

Nevertheless, at same time, most Democrats accept the argument that something—though they are a bit fuzzy about just what—had to be done about Saddam Hussein. For example, Kerry, who voted in favor of the Congressional resolution authorizing the administration to use force against Iraq, admitted in a December 2003 address to the Council on Foreign Relations that it was necessary “to hold Saddam Hussein accountable.”

The crux of the Democrats’ position is “we could have done it smarter and better.” That is, “multilaterally.” The United States, they say, should not have gone to war without United Nations’ approval and the backing of our NATO allies. Thus, as Kerry said, while the U.S. needed to “take the lead” in the effort to deal with Saddam Hussein, the Bush

more apparent that postwar Iraq is a quagmire—perhaps not a Vietnam-like military quagmire, but certainly a political one. Kerry has warned that it is imperative that Iraq “does not become a permanent quagmire.” So how would a Democratic administration deal with postwar Iraq and extricate itself from the mess-in-potamia? Not, if Kerry is president, by “cutting and running.” U.S. troops, Kerry says, must stay in Iraq to provide security so that Iraq can be rebuilt and sovereignty transferred to a democratic government. Not much difference with the administration there.

At the same time, Kerry proposes that a Democratic administration could do a smarter and better job of reconstructing Iraq by acting multilaterally. As Kerry puts it, “Nowhere is the need for the United States to reengage the world community and renew alliances more critical than Iraq.” He argues that the best chance for a successful outcome in postwar Iraq is to put the UN in charge of Iraq’s “reconstruction and governance-building processes.” This is a dog

So how does the Democratic multilateralist critique of the administration’s policy stand up?

With respect to the run-up to the war, it has considerable merit. The administration should have tried harder to rally international support before going to war, it ought to have thought through the consequences of acting without that support, and it should have realized that its failure was a red flag that its policy—and the assumptions on which it was based—was seriously flawed. With respect to postwar Iraq, the Democrats’ critique is insubstantial political grandstanding.

Looking beyond the immediate issue of Iraq, what does the Democrats’ preference for multilateralism portend if they win in November? This is hard to say because multilateralism is, at best, an uncertain guide. Multilateralism’s unspoken assumption is that the rest of the world believes that their interests are identical to America’s. If this harmony of interests really existed, conducting a U.S. foreign policy based on multilateralism would be a no-brainer. After all, there are benefits to be gained from cooperating with other states, and, when it’s possible to do so, it makes enormous sense for the U.S. to enlist partners who will share some of America’s burdens. But multilateralism often runs up against a brick wall because the harmony of interests that it presupposes just is not the way things usually are in the real world. Iraq is a great example of this.

International politics today vary little from the time of Thucydides. Ours is still a world of states in which the foreign policies of all the major powers are determined by national interests. It is still a competitive world. And, in a competitive world, each state must take care of herself. In this sense, unilateralism—going it alone to defend one’s interests—is always the default option for great powers.

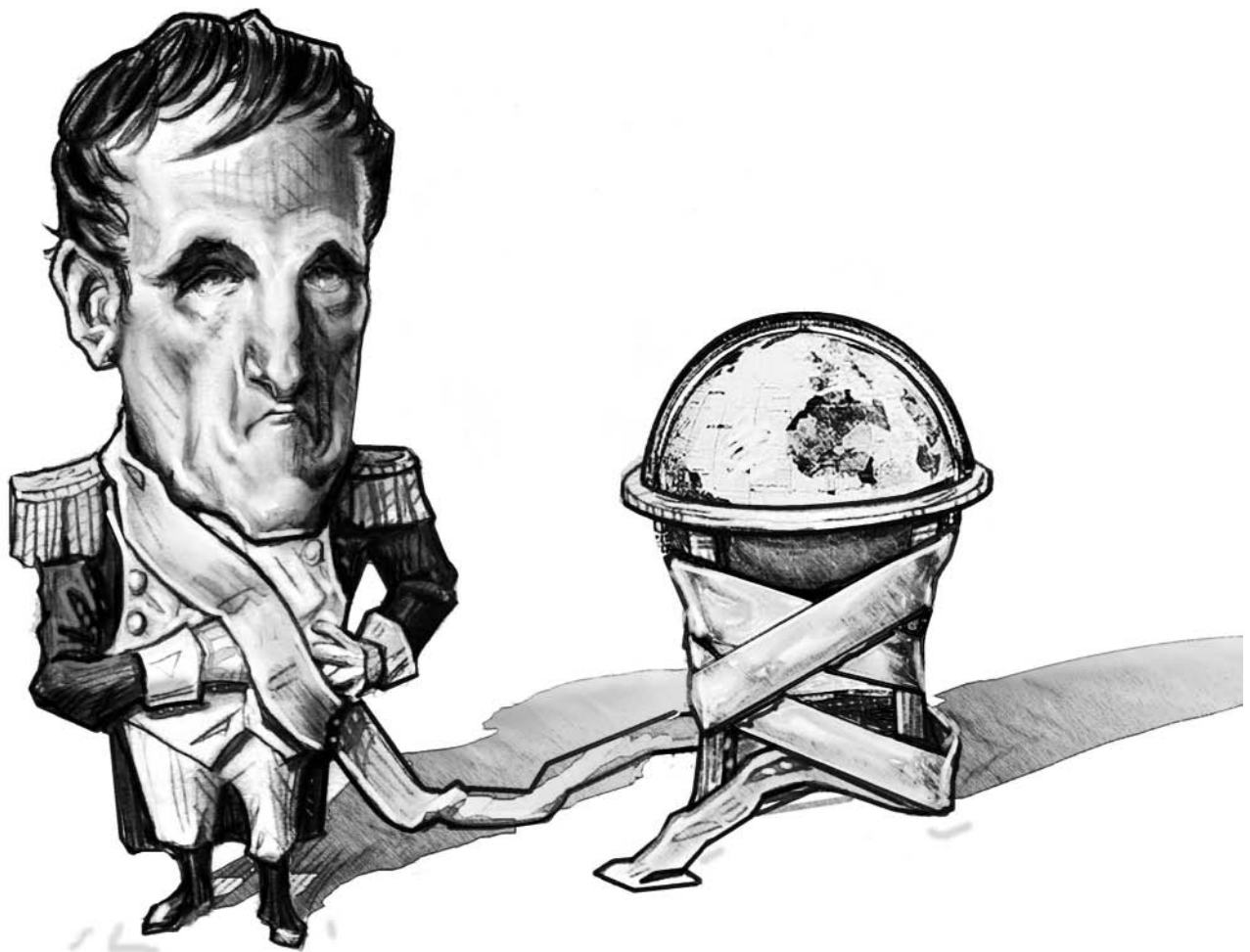
## **MULTILATERALISM’S UNSPOKEN ASSUMPTION IS THAT THE REST OF THE WORLD BELIEVES THAT THEIR INTERESTS ARE IDENTICAL TO AMERICA’S.**

administration “did it in the worst possible way: without the United Nations, without our allies, without a legitimate plan to win the peace.” The administration’s decision to act against Iraq unilaterally, Kerry alleges, “compromised American credibility and leadership.”

Now, of course, the U.S.—for better or worse—is stuck in Iraq and is footing the bill for rebuilding it. Outside of the White House and Pentagon and the coterie of neoconservative cheerleaders who egg them on, it is becoming ever

that won’t hunt, and if the Democrats win in November, they are going to have to do better once they are in office. No one is going to step up and bail out the U.S. in Iraq. And, truth be told, Washington is not going to agree to any meaningful sharing of decision-making power or influence over postwar Iraq because that would undercut one of the key strategic imperatives driving U.S. policy: using Iraq as a permanent American military base to establish uncontested control over the Persian Gulf.





CHRIS HERS

The reason the Bush administration went to war without the multilateral stamp of approval is simple. Washington perceived—incorrectly in my judgment—that U.S. interests required the use of force to effectuate a regime change in Baghdad. Other states—notably France, Germany, and Russia—saw the world differently. They believed that Saddam Hussein's Iraq was effectively contained and could only become a threat, if ever, many years down the road. They believed that their interests would be undercut by the U.S. invasion because they presciently feared chaos in postwar Iraq and greater instability in the Middle East. The same dynamics explain why other states have not exactly rushed to bail the U.S. out of its postwar problems in Iraq. And we should not hold our breaths expecting them to do so, because their view of things is pretty much “you break it, you buy it.” The United States broke Iraq by going to war unilaterally, and now we own the geopolitical equivalent of Marvin Gardens.

Beyond Iraq, the Democrats have a more fundamental indictment of the administration's foreign policy. They believe that Washington's unilateralist approach to foreign policy has driven a wedge between the U.S. and the rest of the world, alienated our allies, and triggered a tidal wave of opposition to the United States. For frontrunner Kerry, Iraq is just another example of the administration's go-it-alone approach that ruffles other nations' feathers. The administration, he says, “consistently runs roughshod over the interests of those nations on a broad range of issues—from climate change, to the International Court of Justice, to the role of the United Nations, to trade, and, of course, to the rebuilding of Iraq itself.” Again, the solution is for the U.S. to act multilaterally. As Kerry sees it, the administration has “abandoned the fundamental tenets that have guided our foreign policy for more than half a century: belief in collective security and alliances, respect for international insti-

tutions and international law, multilateral engagement, and the use of force not as a first option but truly as a last resort.”

Here the Democrats are on to something. As some Clinton administration foreign-policy officials recognized—though without acknowledging their own contributions—in the post-Soviet era, America has a “hegemony problem.” This goes a lot deeper than Bush's diplomatic arrogance. The administration's style exacerbates this, but the problem itself is fundamentally structural.

Simply put, when a single state becomes too powerful in international politics—that is, becomes hegemonic—everyone else feels threatened. And what invariably happens is that in self-defense other states band together to oppose the hegemon. American leaders and foreign policy scholars of all political stripes have concocted a number of fancy theories to explain why the U.S. is an exception to this rule. But it isn't.

Multilateralism is not a panacea, and ultimately America's hegemony problem is not going to go away. But there are bad policies, and worse policies—and, worst of all, the administration's policy. No U.S. administration should ever become so fixated on multilateralism that it allows other states and international institutions to handcuff America's foreign-policy options. But by the same token, it is extraordinarily unwise for Washington to go out of its way to antagonize other states—most especially those that at the end of the day used to back the U.S. reliably, even if reluctantly. Trying hard to co-operate with others makes a lot of sense. Indeed, while military power is—and always will be—the *ultima ratio* in international politics, it is usually a lot more effective as a supplement to diplomacy than when actually employed on the battlefield. It is in America's own interest to exercise its power with restraint and to flex its military muscles as a last resort rather than as the first one.

A Democratic administration would not be all that much different from the Bush I and Clinton administrations. Those two administrations embraced the same formulation: the U.S. will work with others multilaterally when possible, but act unilaterally to defend American interests when it is not. And the fact of the matter is that when America is clearly threatened, it usually gets a lot of support from other states. It is not a coincidence that while the U.S. has been a lone ranger in Iraq, it has received substantial active support from both old allies and new partners in the War on Terror.

In some ways, a Democratic administration would be a foreign-policy improvement over a second Bush II administration. But this is not to suggest that there are not things to worry about. The biggest is that there is a lot less daylight between the Democrats and

Republicans on foreign policy than one would think from listening to campaign speeches. The Democrats have criticized the Bush II administration for fighting a “war of choice” against Iraq. But the Clinton administration did the same thing in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Democrats and Republicans alike are part of a broad bipartisan foreign-policy establishment, and they share the same Wilsonian worldview. They believe that dictators cause trouble and democracy causes peace. It was, after all, Madeleine Albright who coined the phrase “tyrants and terrorists” of which Bush II administration officials are so enamored. When Democrats profess to be shocked by the administration's Wilsonian zeal in going to war to spearhead a “democratic transformation” in the Middle East, they can only mean they are shocked in the same way Captain Renault was shocked

what Bush and other administration officials have said on countless occasions. Similarly, when Kerry says that American policy must prevent “global instability” (not least because it will—or so it is claimed—damage U.S. economic interests), he also is echoing Bush—and every administration since 1940. The Democrats are just as committed to American dominance—albeit with a more human face—as the Republicans. They just think they can be smarter and better hegemonists than the Bush administration.

With respect to foreign policy, the bottom line seems to be this. In some very important respects, a Democratic administration would be an improvement over the Bush II administration—if only marginally. But there is no reason to think a Democratic administration would alter the basic foreign-policy course the U.S. has charted for the last

**THE DEMOCRATS HAVE CRITICIZED THE BUSH II ADMINISTRATION FOR FIGHTING A “WAR OF CHOICE” AGAINST IRAQ. BUT THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION DID THE SAME THING IN SOMALIA, BOSNIA, AND KOSOVO.**

to learn there was gambling in Rick's Café. (Real conservatives—not the “neo” kind—on the other hand, have every right truly to be shocked. By voting for George W. Bush in 2000 it turns out they were electing Woodrow Wilson to a third term.)

The reason Kerry and other Democrats have confined their critique of the administration's Iraq policy to process rather than substance is that they share the same fundamental assumptions about America's world role as their Republican counterparts. After all, when Kerry says that the “use of American power has always been guided by values and principles,” he is only saying

60 years. Certainly there are important questions to be asked. Does America's global engagement enhance the nation's security or actually make it less secure? Should the United States be a nation or an empire? Can the U.S. really be a benevolent and successful hegemon? Does a foreign policy based on Wilsonian ideology really advance U.S. interests or does it undercut them? These are just a few important issues on which a real debate is long overdue. ■

*Christopher Layne writes frequently about U.S. foreign policy and is a member of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy.*

# Another Ayatollah

Sistani's Shia refuse to play their assigned role.

By Eric S. Margolis

IN A REMARKABLE EXAMPLE of historical irony, a scowling, black-turbaned Shia ayatollah has emerged from obscurity for the second time in a quarter century to vex and confound America's plans for the Mideast.

Twenty-four years ago, the U.S. encouraged Iraq's ruler, Saddam Hussein, to invade Iran and overthrow the new revolutionary Islamic government of Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The U.S. and Britain secretly aided Iraq with arms, finance, chemical and biological weapons, intelligence, military advisors, and diplomatic support in its bloody war against Iran that lasted eight years and caused one million casualties. But when Saddam Hussein grew too big for his boots, his former U.S. and British patrons brought him down. Now, over two decades later, another powerful Muslim cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali el-Sistani, is challenging America's Mideast Raj, and Washington has reacted to this perfectly predictable event with deep consternation and confusion.

The Bush administration was assured by the neoconservatives who engineered the Iraq War that a co-operative, turban-free regime of pro-U.S. Iraqis would quickly be installed in Baghdad, led by convicted swindler Ahmad Chalabi. However, if Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress cronies failed, so much the better, went neocon thinking. Their primary objective was to destroy Iraq, not to rebuild it; for Iraq, once the Arab world's best educated, most industrialized

nation, had to be expunged as a potential military and strategic challenge to Israel. So now the U.S. has its own West Bank in Iraq.

In the 1920s, Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky called for Israel to rule "from the Nile to the Euphrates," as the famous slogan went, by smashing the fragile mosaic of its Arab neighbors into ethnic fragments, then seizing the oil riches of Arabia. So Israel's far Right and its American neocon fellow travelers are perfectly happy to see Iraq divided *de facto* into its three component ethnic parts: Shia, Sunni Arab, and Kurd. Better a feeble Iraq broken into weak cantons, like post-1975 Lebanon, than a nation united, even under a U.S.-run regime.

But while Likudniks rejoice at the destruction of their ancient enemy, the United States faces the conundrum of how to forge a seemingly democratic government in Iraq in the face of the nation's impossible ethnic-religious calculus. Installing a brutal general to run Iraq would be far more convenient. But having found no weapons of mass destruction, the embarrassed Bush administration is now touting creation of democracy as its *casus belli* and so must go through the motions of democratization.

Enter Grand Ayatollah Sistani. After his rival, Ayatollah Hakim al-Bakr, was blown to bits by a huge bomb, Sistani emerged as the leading voice of Iraq's Shia. He has so far played a cautious game, urging elections but rejecting

calls by his followers for a more overtly anti-American line or armed resistance. Any fair election will give power to Iraq's Shia, who are 60 percent of the population. If this does not happen, there will be a possible recourse to arms.

Washington has now inherited the identical problem faced by imperial Britain when, in order to control the region's recently discovered oil, it stitched together three disparate Ottoman vilyats to create the Frankenstein state of Iraq.

Britain, following its usual colonial practice of putting compliant ethnic or religious minorities in power, filled the army, police, and government with Sunni Arabs, who made up only 20 percent of the population. Sunnis ruled Iraq from the 1920s until the U.S. overthrew the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Shia were repressed, often savagely, and economically deprived. Iraq's ever-rebellious Kurds were kept under control by frequent punitive expeditions and regular bombing of insurgents by the RAF from its main base at Habbaniyah. Iraq's post-1958 regimes followed this practice. Today, U.S. occupation forces in Iraq are also conducting air pacification, this time against rebellious Sunni Arabs.

Interestingly, Britain's arch-imperialist, Winston Churchill, authorized the RAF to drop poison gas on "primitive tribesmen," meaning Iraq's Kurds and Afghanistan's Pashtun, a fact conveniently forgotten by Tony Blair and

George W. Bush when they excoriated Saddam Hussein for “gassing his own people.”

Having been excluded from political power, Iraq’s well-organized Shia are understandably clamoring for empowerment. Most, though not all, appear to desire what they call Islamic democracy: an Iranian-style combination of elective and consultative assemblies with strong checks and balances, overseen by a supreme religious leader—Grand Ayatollah Sistani.

For Washington, which seeks to run Iraq through a small group of hand-picked satraps, an Islamic government is anathema. But the Bush administration is very eager to proclaim some sort of “democratic” Iraqi government after a “handover of power” next June—in time for U.S. fall elections.

## A FREE VOTE IN IRAQ WILL PRODUCE A SHIA-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT SYMPATHETIC TO NEIGHBORING IRAN.

U.S. proconsul Paul Bremer’s attempt to cobble together a Rube Goldberg system of political caucuses designed to check Shia power, assure Sunni, Kurd, and Turkoman minority rights, and keep the regime under U.S. control, has failed. Ayatollah Sistani has rejected this clumsy, unworkable plan and calls for direct elections as soon as possible. UN advisors, brought in by the U.S. in an effort to paper over differences with the Shia, have backed Sistani’s call for direct elections. Ironically, after proclaiming the dawn of democracy in Iraq, the U.S. is now trying to block direct elections, thwart any form of Islamic government, and deny office to Iraqis opposed to U.S. occupation.

At the same time, Iraq’s Kurds, who now have two virtually independent mini-states in the north, are determined

to create an independent nation in northern Iraq that controls the rich Kirkuk oilfields. They are dead set against losing their newfound political and economic autonomy and refuse to place themselves under either Shia or Sunni Arab rule. And having waged a bloody, two-decade struggle against their own independence-seeking Kurds, the increasingly angry Turks are not about to countenance the emergence of a Kurdish state right across the border that controls major oil fields that once belonged to the Ottoman Empire. But Kurds are America’s closest allies in Iraq, and their voices ring loud in Washington. While Kurds may agree to pay lip service to some powerless national body in Baghdad, they are unlikely to cede political rights or control of customs and oil revenues or to cease driv-

ing ethnic Arabs from the northern regions. They may also fall to tribal feuding at any time, as so often in their past.

This leaves the Sunni Arabs, who are waging a robust insurgency against occupation forces. A new cadre of Sunni Arab nationalist leaders is emerging in the anti-U.S. underground, in tandem with small but lethal numbers of militant Islamic jihadists. They, not the old, discredited Ba’ath Party, will challenge U.S. rule of Iraq. If the insurgency continues—and it shows no signs of abating—Iraq could become a second Afghanistan, an incubator for a new generation of anti-Western militants from across the Muslim World.

A resolution to Iraq’s ethnic problems defies easy answers. A Swiss-style system, with a weak central government and powerful cantons, is probably the

best solution. But long-term, Iraq’s dissolution into three nations may be inevitable.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration is faced with a basic contradiction between its claims of forging a truly democratic Iraq and U.S. strategic ambitions in the region. A free vote in Iraq will produce a Shia-dominated government sympathetic to neighboring Iran. And the ultimate test of any genuine democracy in Iraq will be its ability to order U.S. forces out of Iraq, something the Bush administration will not allow.

The Pentagon plans three major military bases in Iraq from which to control the oil-producing Mideast and to protect the new “Imperial Lifeline,” the pipelines bringing crude westward from the Caspian Basin. Britain used Iraq for the same purpose. In all but name, the U.S. has become heir of the old British Empire.

Washington wants a compliant regime of Iraqi yes-men, what Algerians used to call, “beni oui-ouis,” running internal affairs under the stern gaze of American garrison troops, who will intervene, like the British imperialists, whenever the locals get out of hand or Iraqi politicians grow too independent-minded.

But Ayatollah Sistani and the Shia will not accept a Vichy Iraqi government that excludes them from running Iraq’s foreign and domestic affairs, though that is precisely what Washington plans in June when it “hands over power to Iraqis”—most likely by expanding the existing U.S.-appointed Governing Council of Iraqi collaborators or by staging a rigged national tribal assembly, as was done in Afghanistan. Unfortunately for the Bush administration, it has not yet located in Iraq a glib figurehead like former CIA “asset” in Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai.

So Iraq’s Shia will likely find themselves on a collision course with the U.S. occupation. Younger Shi’ites may disregard their elders’ calls for caution and,



not to be outdone by their Sunni rivals, take up arms. If this happens, the current insurgency in the Sunni Triangle (actually a rectangle) will appear modest by comparison. In fact, as Shia anger and frustration surge, Iraq is increasingly resembling Lebanon during its long civil war, and there appears an inexorable slide towards both a wider insurgency and inter-ethnic strife.

What should the U.S. do? The most sensible course: hand Iraq to the UN and pull out. This would produce intense neocon wailing about loss of credibility and giving in to terrorism. But in fact, the longer the U.S. stays in Iraq, the more credibility it loses, and the more it stokes terrorism.

If a total pullout is not in the cards, then the best option is to co-operate with Iraq's Shia majority and show that the U.S. can work fruitfully with an Islamic regime. Co-operation with Islamists in Baghdad opens the way to good relations with Tehran and a major lessening of anti-American feelings across the Muslim World. But of course, the neocons will do their best to thwart such détente.

The United States has not enough men, treasure, nor intellectual energy to struggle through the morass of Mesopotamian politics and ethnic strife. Governments can usually only think of two or three things at a time, and the mess in Iraq should not be one of them. Otherwise, it will come to bedevil us and sap our energies, just as Iran did in the late 1970s and '80s. Unless we learn from our errors and work to co-operate with the latest problematic mullah, Ayatollah Sistani, he could well become the nemesis of his predecessor, Imam Khomeini, did just two decades ago. ■

*Eric S. Margolis is the author of War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan and Asia and a columnist, commentator, and war correspondent.*

# Life of the Party

Abortion may be the only partisan distinction.

By Timothy P. Carney

ONE YEAR BEFORE the Iowa caucuses, on the 30th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, Kate Michelman showed the world who wears the pants in the Democratic Party. Michelman, president of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), proverbially snapped her fingers, and all six Democrats running for president jumped to attention. Weeks earlier, the Iowa Democratic Party had drawn half that crowd of candidates at their biggest event of the year. In fact, Michelman's group was the first to get the entire field in one place.

She told the assembled hopefuls how high to jump: "I fully expect pro-choice senators to filibuster any nominee who does not affirm that the Constitution protects a woman's right to choose." It did not even need to be said that a pro-*Roe* litmus test was expected for any appointments these men who hoped to be president might make to the federal bench.

Three months earlier, pro-life forces had flexed their muscles. Across Missouri, in Catholic newspapers, on Christian radio, and even in a state Republican Party mailing, Republican challenger Jim Talent's supporters highlighted their man's anti-abortion record and Democratic Sen. Jean Carnahan's pro-abortion stance. Fox News conducted a poll after the election in which 17 percent of Missourians said that abortion was the most important issue in their choosing a candidate in that race. Of those, 80 percent voted for Talent, the pro-life candidate. That would suggest an edge of more than 43,000 voters for Talent on the

abortion issue alone—nearly twice his margin of victory over Carnahan and a larger edge than on any other issue.

The same story played out in the other two 2002 GOP takeovers that led to Republicans reclaiming control of the Senate. Georgia's Saxby Chambliss won 73 percent of the voters who picked abortion as their prime issue (9 percent), while Minnesota's Norm Coleman garnered 81 percent of the 14 percent in that state who voted mostly on abortion.

No issue played as central a role in the 2002 elections as did abortion—neither the slumping economy nor the impending Iraq War, where voters broke more evenly between the parties.

Many pro-life activists compare abortion to slavery: it is the greatest evil in our society today, they say, based on denying the humanity of an entire class of people. The comparison may be true at least in a political sense. By the 1850s, almost the only reason to be a Republican was to oppose the institution of slavery. Abortion may not be quite as politically definitive today, but signs indicate that it is becoming so.

While the parties find some middle ground on taxes, guns, and war, the polarization over abortion is stark. And within each party, being "wrong" on abortion makes one virtually ineligible to seek the presidency. Politicians talk about taxes and war, and most pollsters look at public opinion about Iraq and jobs, but the real machinery of politics—the money and the voters—is often driven by abortion.

Broadly, conservatives have few reasons to be confident about the direction of their party. But on abortion, the GOP is on course—despite the resistance of many of the party's elites—to once again become the party of abolition. There are exceptions to the general partisan trends over abortion—a couple of Democrats were at the signing of last year's partial-birth abortion ban, and some Republicans take NARAL money—but not at the highest level.

In 1977, a Missouri congressman sponsored a constitutional amendment to outlaw almost all abortions in an effort to re-establish “the right to life of any person ... including the unborn at every stage of biological development.” That sponsor was Dick Gephardt, who later

got demolished in his bid for the gubernatorial nomination by the better-funded pro-choice mayor of Philadelphia, Ed Rendell, who had the backing of national Democrats.

The third way for pro-life Democrats is that of Ray Flynn, the former mayor of Boston, whose devout Catholicism impelled him to bolt the party in 2000 to endorse George W. Bush.

A similar, but less stark, phenomenon appears across the aisle. Steve Forbes learned after his first presidential bid that he could not get anywhere walking a blurred line on abortion. And Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, otherwise the most sensible pick for Bush's running mate in 2000, was chased out by the pro-life armies in the GOP.

the nomination who opposed the Iraq War from the beginning.

On immigration, only open-borders politicians can rise to the top in either party, and the same is generally true of free-traders. But on abortion, not only is there no middle ground at the highest level, there is a chasm. Republicans, increasingly, must be anti-abortion, or their voters will stay home. For Democrats, it's not so much voters on the line as money.

The poll numbers in 2002's Georgia, Missouri, and Minnesota upsets show that a pro-abortion Republican would have lost those races. In 2000, exit polls showed that voters attending church services weekly favored President Bush by 15 points. Faithful and observant Catholics, despite historical ethnic voting habits, a media-driven perception that the GOP is weaker on social justice, and Pope John Paul II's objections to the war, are now voting Republican for the first time. Bush won among Catholics who attend mass weekly by seven points in 2000—an amazing feat considering how many Catholics are Hispanics or from Massachusetts and New York.

Democrats, on the other hand, do not worship at the NARAL altar for votes. They are praying, instead, for cash—and they get it. According to an Open Secrets.org analysis of FEC documents, women's issues and pro-abortion groups, which considerably overlap, gave Democrats nearly \$9 million in 2002. Three of the five largest “bundles” of campaign contributions to Senate candidates in the 2002 came from EMILY's List, an explicitly pro-choice women's group that donates only to Democrats. EMILY's List also accounted for four of the five largest bundled contributions to House candidates that year.

Bundled and direct donations from pro-choice organizations do not tell the whole story, however. Wealthy pro-choice individuals are also an important source of fundraising—for both parties.

## REPUBLICANS MUST BE **ANTI-ABORTION** OR THEIR VOTERS WILL STAY HOME.

wrote in a 1984 letter to a constituent, “I have always been supportive of pro-life legislation. I intend to remain steadfast on this issue.” He didn't. By 1988, when he first ran for president, Gephardt no longer opposed abortion. For his second bid, in 2000, he said, “The freedom to choose has never been in more peril than it is today, and the imperative for the Democratic Party is to assert and reassert its leadership and to protect this vital right.”

Even Dennis Kucinich—who never had a chance of getting the nomination—turned 180 degrees on abortion to run for president. His 100 percent pro-life record in the Ohio State Senate and the U.S. House vanished in the spring of 2002, and he flew to the opposite pole—voting the NARAL line. For the religion of abortion, the trail to Iowa is the road to Damascus.

Those Democrats who do not go the way of Gephardt and Kucinich may go the way of Bob Casey. The Pennsylvania Auditor General, a pro-life Democrat,

There are pro-*Roe* Republicans, to be sure. One, Sen. Arlen Specter (Penn.), is in line to chair the Judiciary Committee. But Specter's pathetic presidential run in 1996 is a sign of a GOP glass ceiling. Last March, during the debate on partial-birth abortion, some of these typically liberal Republicans (such as Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine) voted in favor of a resolution that *Roe* was rightly decided. They were joined by two senior Republicans who are not otherwise very liberal: Ted Stevens (Alaska) and John Warner (Va.). One pro-lifer at the time said of these two, with about 70 years of Senate service between them, “at least they are a dying breed.” These days, the only younger Republicans who stick up for abortion are those who, like Specter and Snowe, generally act like Democrats across the board.

Other issues do not see lines so well drawn. John Kerry sticks up for the Second Amendment. Wesley Clark wanted to cut middle-class taxes. Howard Dean was the only serious contender for

This is the major exception to the rule that Republicans are pro-life; the voters are, as are the top politicians, but many of the donors and fundraisers are not. GOP Finance Chairman Lew Eisenberg is a perfect example. Part of the Republican Leadership Council, which aims to wipe social issues out of the GOP platform, Eisenberg is the go-to guy on raising funds for Republicans. The fat cats who cut the big checks or round up hundreds of donations to become "Pioneers" or "Rangers" typically hail from Manhattan's Upper East Side or from Hollywood—rarely from Cheyenne or Tulsa. While GOP votes come from the Red States, GOP cash comes from the Blue States, so Republicans must walk a fine line between pro-life voters and pro-choice donors.

Democrats have a different sort of tension. They are uneasy running on an issue where their victories are supplied by the courts rather than elected officials. As with many of the major advances by liberals, abortion-on-demand could not have happened through the legislative process. Imagine a constitutional amendment, or even a bill, passing both houses of Congress that legalized abortion at all stages and stripped most power to regulate—even partial-birth abortion—from the states. Democrats can only move the ball forwards through the courts, which is why they are willing to lay everything on the line to block Bush's judges.

Elites on both sides of the aisle do not want abortion to become a defining issue, but those who fund the Democratic Party and those who vote for the Republican Party will not let it fade away. Abortion has become a bright partisan dividing line in a way no moral issue has been since slavery, and this alone should encourage pro-lifers in their struggle to become today's abolitionists. ■

*Timothy P. Carney is a reporter for the Evans-Novak Political Report.*

# Intelligence Quotient

Politics, unreliable defectors, and lack of human source clouded the President's strategic vision.

**By Philip Giraldi**

WHEN MILITARY DISASTER led to imperial Rome's loss of the province of Germania in AD 9, Augustus Caesar reportedly went into mourning, drawing his toga over his head and refusing to shave or cut his hair, sometimes banging his forehead against palace doors while crying out for his lost legions. If America's imperial pretensions in Iraq meet a similar fate, Bush, Cheney, Powell, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz are unlikely to forego a haircut for dead soldiers and squandered resources. So has our sense of political accountability diminished since the Roman Principate.

It is evident that the Bush administration prepared to go to war against Iraq even before Sept. 11. Though the intelligence community exists to provide reliable information to assist policy formulation, in the case of Iraq, the intelligence was clearly used retroactively and selectively in worst-case scenarios to support a pre-existing policy. Examination of a timeline reveals that the administration often adopted aggressive positions despite soft supporting intelligence, which was then re-examined and hardened to justify the already established policy. Whether accurate intelligence forcefully presented could have derailed the rush to war is questionable, but intelligence failure is now being blamed for the decision to launch a war that is increasingly difficult to defend politically. To argue retroactively that the CIA never said that the Iraqi threat was "imminent," as

George Tenet has done, is hairsplitting. Tenet clearly positioned himself and the Agency he heads as guarantors of the administration's veracity, both at the UN and in Washington. Rightly or wrongly, the intelligence community has become the preferred scapegoat for the White House.

Constant administration sloganeering has defined and redefined the nature of the Iraqi threat and obscured the original rationale for going to war. Colin Powell even suggested that if the intelligence had been better, the war might not have been fought, though he quickly recanted. That an intelligence failure took place is indisputable, at least in the sense that the data collected and provided to the policymakers was more often than not misleading, false, incomplete, or fabricated. That the intelligence community was unable to collect detailed, reliably-sourced information that would have served to illuminate critical issues relating to the Iraqi weapons programs is also indisputable.

Looking closely at pre-war statements made by policymakers and comparing those positions to the collective judgment of the intelligence community as expressed in its National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of October 2002 reveals a large measure of unanimity between policy and intelligence, even when there were caveats and dissenting views or little in the way of new information to support the conclusions they reached. This should not be particularly surpris-

ing. As the intelligence community has only one customer, the president, it does what it can to make the customer happy.

The judgments expressed in the NIE are particularly significant because they constitute the carefully formulated consensus product of the entire intelligence community. In this case, the NIE was an uncharacteristically political document, expedited by Tenet without the usual final vetting by the National Foreign Intelligence Board. The key findings stated unambiguously that Iraq had an abundant supply of biochem weapons and delivery systems and would soon have a nuclear device.

A careful examination of the document set alongside pre-war statements by the administration reveals four persistent elements in the Iraq intelligence-gathering process that led to overall failure. First, the pre-existing political agenda forced analysts to play catch-up in an attempt to validate what the White House was already saying. Second, analysts were overly dependent on easily gathered technical intelligence and on information obtained from friendly governments because they were woefully short on information from human spies. Third, analysts could not judge the credibility of the sources they were using and invariably veered towards worst-case scenarios that assumed that past history predicts current behavior. Fourth, uncorroborated and often fabricated defector intelligence from Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress, used by Doug Feith's Pentagon Office of Special Plans to support the case for war, went directly to the president by way of Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney without CIA vetting.

The administration used the collective description "weapons of mass destruction" to define the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's regime. WMD include chemical, biological, and nuclear devices. Prior to the war against Iraq,

administration spokesmen described the threat from WMD as real and immediate, though there were some nuances employed in terms of the individual threats subsumed within the collective description. Some of the administration's judgments vis-à-vis Iraq's WMD were derived from intelligence-community analysis, though others were based on unreliable defector information or on political assessment of the presumed intentions of the Iraqi leadership.

Nuclear weapons were the greatest threat to the United States and were consequently emphasized. The administration stated that Saddam might have or soon develop a nuclear weapon. It cited his efforts to purchase equipment that could be used to enrich uranium, as well as attempts to obtain yellowcake in Africa. Prior to the preparation of the most recent NIE, the intelligence community's best judgment was that Iraq had a nuclear research and development project and was possibly seeking to acquire technical material to reconsti-

never revived. The yellowcake story was a complete fabrication and had previously been exposed as such by the CIA, even though it later made its way into the NIE and State of the Union Address. The faulty intelligence assessment of Iraq's capabilities was based on the unfortunate assumption that Saddam was hiding something and had bad intentions. It was supported by intentionally false intelligence, most of which came from the neoconservatives' defector sources. The persistence of the yellowcake story was indefensible since it was already known to be erroneous. The intelligence community meanwhile had no human intelligence sources in the Iraqi weapons program to correct both its own and the administration's misperceptions. Both the policymakers and the intelligence community were completely wrong on every aspect of Iraq's nuclear program.

Biological and chemical weapons were another major concern. The administration stated repeatedly that Iraq had

## THE PRE-EXISTING POLITICAL AGENDA FORCED ANALYSTS TO PLAY CATCH-UP IN AN ATTEMPT TO VALIDATE WHAT THE WHITE HOUSE WAS ALREADY SAYING.

tute its program. The NIE then hardened that view, stating that Iraq had definitely revived its program and would probably have a nuclear weapon by 2010. Like the White House, it cited purchases of equipment and attempts to buy uranium ore in Africa as proof.

State Department intelligence and the Department of Energy dissented, stating that the overall evidence for a nuclear program was inconclusive. In reality, it was subsequently learned that the United Nations had effectively dismantled Saddam's nuclear program, which was

hundreds of tons of identified stockpiles of both types of weapons, "capable of killing millions." They were described as constituting an imminent threat to Iraq's neighbors and potentially to the United States. Baghdad was also accused of having mobile bio-weapon labs. Pre-NIE intelligence estimates had suggested that Iraq might be hiding stockpiles and might have recreated dual-use production lines. The NIE again hardened that position, asserting "high confidence" that Iraq both had stockpiles and had begun new production. The intelligence



community made the claim because it could not be confirmed that all stockpiles had been destroyed post-1991, and it was widely assumed that production lines were being hidden from gullible UN inspectors. Much of this assessment was based on pre-1991 realities and historic use of such weapons on Iranians, Kurds, and Shi'ites.

Additional reporting from Iraqi defectors controlled by neoconservative favorite Chalabi and his associates claimed the stockpiles and mobile weapons labs existed. These reports were debunked by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) at the time and have since been determined to have been fabricated. Misinterpreted aerial photos appearing to confirm munitions storage areas were featured in Colin Powell's presentation to the UN. Again, the intelligence community had no human agents reporting on the possible Iraqi program so it could not address the biochem issue authoritatively by relying on a knowledgeable inside source. In fact, it now appears certain that Iraq had no biological or chemical weapons and that all its stockpiles were destroyed post-1991 by the United Nations. Two trailers initially identified as mobile labs are now generally conceded to be hydrogen generators for artillery balloons. As in the case of the nuclear weapons, the policymakers were wrong, and the intelligence community also failed in its assessment based on faulty prior case analysis, on a lack of human agents in place, and on manufactured confirmatory information generated by the Pentagon.

WMD are only as usable as their delivery systems, so Iraq's ability to employ its weapons became the third object of White House scrutiny. The administration stated that Iraq had medium-range Scud-type missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) capable of striking American troops and allies in the Middle

East and also posing a threat to the United States itself using chemical or biological payloads. The NIE stated that Iraq had some Scuds and also had a program for larger missiles and UAVs, though Air Force intelligence dissented on the latter judgment. In reality, Iraq's Scuds were largely destroyed by UN

ship, often coming from the neoconservative-connected Iraqi National Congress defectors, was considered by DIA to be either unreliable or fabricated.

Even the White House has finally agreed that the case for an Iraq-al-Qaeda link is speculative. A recently surfaced U.S. Army memo relating to a planned

IT WAS OFTEN IMPLIED THAT SADDAM WAS SOMEHOW **TIED TO SEPT. 11.**

THE **INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY** WORKED VERY HARD TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THERE WERE LINKS BUT WAS **UNABLE TO DO SO.**

inspectors in the 1990s, though Baghdad retained some research and development capabilities. No UAVs have been discovered that were weaponized. Again, both the policymakers and the intelligence community were completely wrong. The intelligence failure consisted of the analysts' belief that Iraqi military priorities that had prevailed in the past would inevitably continue in the present and into future. If Iraq had missiles prior to 1991, it would always want to have missiles. Defector information provided by the Pentagon was alarmist and inaccurate, and technical intelligence collection provided no significant insights. Again, there were no human-source agents within Iraq's missile program to provide balance.

One last major selling point was Iraq's suspected ties to terrorist groups. The administration stated unambiguously that Iraq had links to al-Qaeda and would not hesitate to provide terrorist groups with WMD. It was often implied that Saddam was somehow tied to Sept. 11, so much so that most Americans believed it to be true. The intelligence community worked very hard to demonstrate that there were links between al-Qaeda and Iraq but was unable to do so. Information suggesting such a relation-

al-Qaeda disruption of postwar Iraq does not appear to contradict the consensus that Iraq and al-Qaeda had no operational connection. The October 2002 NIE did not address the issue of possible terrorist ties, though it did pirouette around the administration view that Iraq would likely give WMD to terrorists. It stated that Saddam would be unlikely to pursue such a course for fear of being attacked, though he might become desperate enough to do so to exact revenge if he were facing defeat. The differences between policymakers and the intelligence community were widest over the issue of terrorist connections. The White House persisted in saying such ties existed until it became clear that the assertion was indefensible. Vice President Cheney continues to suggest that Iraq and al-Qaeda were connected, but no other senior official currently makes the case for this view.

The administration was wrong and the intelligence community was right, not because of good inside information, but because of effective analysis of what was available. ■

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*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.*

# It's the Jobs, Stupid

To the Beltway's surprise, primary voters grasp the importance of fair trade.

By Martin Sieff

A STRANGE THING happened on the way to the Democratic National Convention in Boston. The Democrats discovered protectionism, though of course, none of them dares call it that.

The way was pioneered by a candidate with impeccable protectionist credentials, Rep. Dick Gephardt of Missouri. Yet he got nowhere. He was pulverized in the Iowa caucuses and pulled out the very next day.

An experience like that ought to have confirmed all the other Democratic candidates in their well established conviction that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was A Good Thing and the World Trade Organization is too. But strangely enough, Gephardt's fate did not deter the others. He was more like a fox, laying a trail that the hounds eagerly chased when they caught the scent, even after they had torn him to bits.

It was Howard Dean of Vermont, that strange precursor of a new or revived Democratic national spirit, who took up the tattered banner. Even in the closing days of the Iowa race, Dean was already scenting around protectionist issues in that curiously prescient, intuitive yet unfocused way of his. Just before flying out of Iowa for his disastrous adventure in trying to woo former President Jimmy Carter two days before the caucuses, he told reporters on his campaign bus that he favors re-negotiating the terms of the WTO and NAFTA.

The former governor said he still believes in free trade but only when it is fair. And it isn't fair when countries like

Mexico and China don't have free trade unions, have vastly lower environmental standards, and appalling records on human rights. "International free trade must not be distorted into a race to the bottom," Dean said.

It was a thoughtful analysis delivered off the cuff in response to a question from this reporter. But no one else paid attention to it amid such epochal issues for the Republic as Dean's odyssey to Georgia or his wife Judy's "blink and you missed it" four-hour daring venture into the Hawkeye State.

In the Jan. 19 caucuses Dean melted down, a victim of his own weirdness and a clumsy campaign. That should have been the end of the jobs and protectionism issue. Sen. John Kerry, after all, had voted for NAFTA along with the Senate Democrat consensus in 1993, and Sen. John Edwards had not exactly been a protectionist hawk during his one and only Senate term.

But as the race inexorably turned into a two-man contest amid the arctic blasts of New Hampshire and then down to the balmy climes of South Carolina, a strange thing happened: the two Senator Johns started picking up trade too. Almost overnight, it went from being the issue of the losers to a staple of the debate between the two frontrunners. How to explain this conundrum?

The answer is simple: Dean was destroyed not by issues but by his personal flaws and appalling strategy. In order to defeat him, more credible and skillful national candidates had to co-

opt his message, and that included protecting jobs and confronting the unfair terms of international trade. By Wisconsin, Dean's Waterloo, Edwards was promising, "I will not sign a trade agreement ... that does not embrace enforceable labor and environmental standards. ... Senator Kerry is entitled ... to support free trade as [he] always [has]." In a state that has lost 75,000 manufacturing jobs, that was good enough to guarantee Edwards a second-place finish and to send Howard Dean home to Vermont. Though it had scarcely been a centerpiece of his campaign, the night Kerry claimed victory over Dean, his speech included a promise to "insist on workers' rights and environmental rights and human rights in every trade agreement."

Edwards perfected his trade pitch to Dean's detriment in Wisconsin, but he had begun to practice in more familiar territory. In South Carolina, a state hit hard by the collapse of its textile industry in the face of foreign competition and the consequent loss of some 400,000 jobs, rank-and-file Democratic voters are less enamored with free trade than the national party leadership. There the biographical fact Edwards most emphasized was not his tremendous success as a trial lawyer but that he is the son of a mill worker. He began turning his signature "two Americas" speech toward trade, pledging that he would negotiate fair trade deals, stand up for U.S. trade rights, and keep companies from relocating abroad. In bilateral trade agreements, he told South Carolinians, "both

sides should give up something, not just America."

With Gephardt gone and the Dean ranks in disarray, trade policy handed Edwards an issue he could use to differentiate himself from Kerry and to define himself as a populist candidate. Kerry managed to denounce "Benedict Arnold" companies that "ship American jobs overseas," but his acceptance of \$370,000 in campaign cash from their CEOs made him an unreliable messenger. Nor did Edwards come to the issue with clean hands. Like Kerry, he voted for permanent favored nation status for China, and while he emphasized that he voted against trade pacts with Singapore, Chile, Africa, and the Caribbean that the senator from Massachusetts supported, he could only promise that he wouldn't have voted for NAFTA if he had been in the Senate, a barbed charge that reminded voters of his political inexperience.

But Edwards had a bigger problem that returned to roost on Super Tuesday. Though many of the states he looked to in his last-ditch effort to halt Kerry's long march toward the nomination have been deeply affected by the loss of manufacturing jobs—Ohio, Georgia, and upstate New York—by then the industrial unions that backed Dick Gephardt had inexplicably endorsed John Kerry. Still, Edwards pinned his presidential hopes on what he had come to regard as "a moral issue," appealing to voters who have watched their paychecks and hometowns bleed away with the closing of factories and mills. It wasn't enough. Edwards is out, but with 2.3 million jobs lost on George W. Bush's watch, the issue lives on, as John Kerry's campaign-trail conversion proves.

Throughout his career, Kerry has avoided rocking the boat with the party establishment on trade issues. Yet the way he swept the Missouri primary, with half the total votes cast, showed that even if like St. Paul his conversion hap-

pened late on the Road to the White House, if not Damascus, it came in time for him to do the Lord's Work just the same. For Missouri, a crucial bellwether state that has gone for the successful presidential candidate in all elections save one in a hundred years, has also been hard hit by the loss of jobs to international competition.

Kerry picked up that scent and began to see the political potency of the trade issue. He called for a 120-day review of all existing trade agreements and pledged not to sign any new ones until the review is complete and its recommendations are in place. He also began pounding the obvious point against Bush: the national jobless rate is low by historical standards, a mere 5.7 percent. But that is still up a long way from the 4.1 percent Bush inherited

appeals and tiptoeing around its harsher prescriptions. And both candidates undermined their own cases by eagerly endorsing that old Democratic mantra of redistributive taxation—as if cutting up the economic pie differently will solve all the problems when the real problem is that the pie itself is shrinking by the day.

Still the Democrats have Bush on the run. His master strategist Karl Rove hoped to steer this campaign in a different direction, keeping Bush above the fray by presenting him as a seasoned "war president"—a plan that got upended by Tim Russert and the Kerry camp's sniping at Bush's less than stellar National Guard record. Now the Bush campaign is trying to shift the ground again to make the election, in part, a referendum on gay marriage.

#### AS THE **CONSEQUENCES OF BAD TRADE DEALS** ROLL IN, WHAT WAS ONCE A WORKING MAN'S MALADY HAS **GONE MAINSTREAM.**

from Clinton, and it is a massaged, sunny-side picture, artificially depressed by the expanding number of burger-flipping jobs and part-time employment, not to mention the well attested phenomenon of the demoralized poor and long-term unemployed no longer bothering to go through the motions of signing on to look for new work.

With eight months to go to the Big Vote, this presidential election, once again, is all about "the economy, stupid." It is therefore all about jobs and all about protecting them. The Kerry Attack Machine understands this well, and they are going after Bush as the fabled 1.8 million jobs promised by the his tax cuts and the blessings of international free trade fail to materialize.

Protectionism, of course, is still a virtue that dare not declare its own name. Edwards and Kerry expertly danced around the issue, trumpeting its populist

But through all these smoke screens and myths, prevarications and evasions, one great issue still looms up as inexorable as the iceberg that sunk the Titanic. As the consequences of bad trade deals roll in, what was once a working man's malady has gone mainstream: the plight of steelworkers now threatens computer programmers. *USA Today* recently published a poll that found that among Americans making more than \$100,000—traditionally free trade's strongest allies—support has collapsed from 57 percent to 28 percent. Voters know firsthand the truth Gephardt pioneered, Dean advanced, Edwards carried to a second-place finish, and Kerry is now beginning to sample: it's about jobs and the best way to keep them in America, stupid. ■

*Martin Sieff is chief news analyst for United Press International.*

# In Praise of Laudanum

For some, “addiction” may be the only cure.

By Jim Pittaway

ONE OF THE ELEMENTS of dramatic tension in the wonderful *Master and Commander* series of books is the relationship between the brilliant and resourceful ship’s surgeon, Dr. Maturin, and the laudanum with which he self-medicates. Author Patrick O’Brian is widely praised for the authenticity of his rendering of the language, behaviors, and mores of Napoleonic times, but here he projects contemporary issues onto his characters and their circumstances. A real Dr. Maturin, like his contemporary Capt. Meriwether Lewis—with his famous “melancholia”—would have been perfectly free to medicate himself to his heart’s content without enduring either social opprobrium or shame and self-doubt. If Rush Limbaugh lived in any other era, we would not be having a national conversation about his behavior and the state would never be pursuing his medical records for evidence of crimes he may or may not have perpetrated upon himself.

Over the decade I have spent as a practitioner licensed by my state to treat, among other things, addiction and addiction-related disorders, I have become increasingly troubled by things other than my patients’ actual use. As I have transitioned from in-patient addiction treatment and private practice to working with head-injured and often severely disabled patients, I have become less doctrinaire about use itself and more aware of complexities of circumstance as they affect individuals. The cases causing me the greatest concern

have one common element: they involve pain medication.

Until the great government power-grab of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal, Americans were assumed competent to treat themselves for chronic or acute pain, as well as for what we now imperfectly describe as chemical imbalances of the brain—such as bipolar disorder—by simply stopping at a corner apothecary and purchasing such tincture of opium as they judged appropriate for their needs. This actually went on for centuries without generating serious social or moral problems. Undoubtedly, many individuals became “addicted” and the opportunity for drug “abuse” abounded, but such excesses were the business of family and community. No tyrannical European king or dictator even dreamed of so intruding on the private lives of individuals as to interfere with access to pain relief and psychological equilibrium. At least not until FDR’s Harry Anslinger, of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, set about criminalizing vast tracts of human behavior in his push to build a crime-fighting empire on behalf of the state whose power he and his boss were so dedicated to expanding.

I should point out that the development of highly refined opiates such as morphine and, later, heroin in the early 20th century changed opiate use, and serious social consequences emerged that were not present in the earlier age of laudanum. Also the proliferation of powerful stimulant, sedative, and hallu-

cinogenic drugs with no significant medical application, but with enormous potential for abuse, contributes to a horrible national and international drug problem. The idea that the family and community, in decline if not disintegration, could provide a bulwark against these problems is laughable. But it is equally fair to say that the magnitude of the drug problem in society coincides with the blanket criminalization of medical as well as non-medical drug use, and the preposterousness of Limbaugh’s pain treatment as a public obsession and a license for abuse of power by the state shows that the “drug problem” is not always just about use.

As I become a more experienced therapist, I am less sanguine about treating addiction as such and not entirely sure that I know what addiction is. The term has been so widely misapplied as to become, like “terrorism,” essentially empty of meaning except in terms of the biases and agenda of the person using it. Addiction is applied to tobacco use by the anti-smoking crowd, to fast food, exercise, sex; so many things, in fact, that if I am going to treat addiction, I may as well be treating Original Sin but, of course, only those elements of the Fall currently out of favor with the state or organized groups and constituencies. This is not healing art; this is the therapist in some Orwellian nightmare as manipulative enforcer of conformity and adversary of spontaneity and individuality. But in a society where choice has come to mean the taking of innocent



life as a matter of personal convenience, I guess the idea of the individual actually choosing anything as mundane as how to treat his own physical or psychological pain has no value at all.

Over time, I have come to view my work in increasingly simple terms: consequences. I factor in, but do not really weigh, what a patient uses, how much he uses, how often he uses, what his spouse, mother, boss, or society thinks about his use. These are problems only insofar as they generate consequences for the patient as an individual. If a patient is experiencing serious consequences related to his use that he is incapable of dealing with rationally, then that patient has a problem and I can help. But if the patient is fully functional and the consequences are related entirely to supply, then I'm beginning to have a problem. And these are the people this piece is about.

It didn't used to be that way. I bundled consequences related to supply right in with consequences related to use, as I was trained to do. Thus the fully functional guy with the landscaping business experiencing legal consequences as a result of altering a Loritab prescription was in the same boat as the professor whose life was falling apart and had legal consequences from his second DUI. One is a mess because of the effects the drug has on him, the other has no problems caused by the drug itself, but his life is a mess because he has the arrogance to think that he knows what he needs and the impulse to take serious risks to get it. But I would see them both the same, insist on total abstinence, and send them both back to the slammer when they screwed up. (Yes, we do have that kind of power, lots of it, and it is arbitrary and unreviewable.)

For me, the problem began to emerge in the out years. I live and work in a small city where I regularly run into former patients. When I see the professor, my

sense of professional satisfaction is enormous. Now something of an AA elder, he's the picture of social and emotional health, happily remarried, his life fully restored. He is a beacon of recovery to others likewise afflicted. He sees treatment as an instrument of his liberation from a horror that was killing him while destroying, one ugly episode at a time, everything that mattered in his life. This man was very sick, and now he's better.

Once a year I hire a crew from the landscaper because it remains the best-run business of its kind in town. The boss always comes by to check. He too is clean and sober but the recovery that the professor radiates is not available to him. Not because he wouldn't do anything to have it, but because abstinence is not the cure for his affliction. Treatment has helped him find ways to cope that have enabled him finally to get the correctional people out of his life. But I see in him deep sorrow and loss, and I

### **ABSTINENCE IS NOT THE CURE FOR HIS AFFLICTION.**

despise a piece of what I do. This man remains unwell and doubly afflicted because though he knows exactly how to get well, the means are simply not available to him.

So, after a few years, a line began to emerge differentiating ostensibly successful treatment outcomes as I was able to observe the longer-term realities of the business I am in. The treatment failures are not a problem for me. They are fewer than the layman would imagine, but I have my full fair share of drunks who won't stop destroying themselves and everyone around them; speed and coke freaks who wind up in prison because they won't stop cooking, dealing, and acting out; potheads who squander their God-given potential in delusional hazes; barbiturate users wallowing in the pathos of their petty

neuroses. Such things are about life and human weaknesses, so let God sort them out, I say. But with some of my opiate patients, something else is going on, and I began to connect this to the fact that opiates, unlike liquor, speed, coke, and pot, have remarkable, powerful, unique, and irreplaceable medical efficacies.

My melancholia patients represent a small portion of my patient population—about one in 30 overall, and 20 percent of my opiate load—so it would have been easy never to stumble on this line. But once stumbled upon, it had to be explored, and the line has become much brighter as I have contemplated the body count. Among the patients I have treated over the last ten years who have had successful treatment outcomes, five committed suicide. These five have one thing in common—opiate “melancholia.” In addition, all were high-functioning, bright, imaginative people with intact lives, families, and careers. Each reported

reactions to opiates that mirror giving ADD kids stimulants to calm them down: the opiates energize rather than sedate; they organize rather than disorient thinking. These patients had explored the vast new pharmacopeias of anti-depressant drugs now available—and so efficacious for so many—but without result for them. All had been clean, sober, and ostensibly in recovery for at least two years. They faced recovery with diligence and commitment, but with stoicism rather than more common resistance or enthusiasm. Importantly, each was introduced to opiates by physicians in the course of legitimate medical applications. And the consequences related to their use were legal in nature and had solely to do with securing supply.

So the line differentiating some of my pain-pill people from all the other

substance-dependent patients I treat has become brighter as time clarifies outcomes. Just now it is blinding me a little bit because I have one of these patients, whom I believe will not survive, and I am not enjoying much success in my search for a solution. He is known to have committed the now infamous crime of “doctor shopping,” so we have a problem. No doctor in this town will even talk to me about this man.

I can’t help noting the sad irony here: it is unthinkable politically incorrect for a doctor to hold a patient responsible for a basket of conditions—STDs, Hepatitis C, AIDS, alcoholism—in which the patient’s own behavioral choices play an important causal role. But when the survival instincts of these melancholia patients, awakened by legitimate medical procedures, start to take over and they begin seeking opiates, they are not only judged, they are cast out as moral lepers. This is not only socially acceptable but encouraged.

It’s hard not to sympathize with the box the doctors are in. Untold billions spent by pharmaceutical companies over the past century have failed to produce anything remotely as effective as opiates for acute pain relief. Doctors, who have a moral and ethical imperative to reduce the suffering of their patients, have no alternative but to prescribe opiate-based pain medication. Thus my melancholia patients are exposed, in the normal course of medical care, to a substance that not only relieves pain but also acts as a wonderfully effective antidote to problems derived from the peculiar chemistry of their brains. Feeling competent, functional, and emotionally stable for the first time in their adult lives, these patients can become quite devious in efforts to secure their supply—not to get high, as the doctors assume, but to feel functional. Fearing addiction, the doctors inevitably cut the patient off, and the patient either begins doctor shopping or

seeks supply on the illegal market. Eventually, the patient’s schemes collapse, and he winds up in the care of people like me, cast into the mix with other substance-dependent people and provided undifferentiated abstinence-based treatment. Of course it doesn’t work and, worse, when treatment appears to work, the results can be lethal.

The appalling problem for doctors and patients alike is that this is a game with no rules—only dire consequences, arbitrarily applied. Unless this is to remain some kind of deadly game of gotcha, protocols and procedures must to be established that kick in when opiate-based pain medication is prescribed for more than two or three weeks. This would not be complicated. Patients would agree to provide a clean urine sample every two weeks, which would require them to abstain for 48 hours or so and prevent buildup of tolerance. In return, the patient could determine the length of time opiate treatment, whether for pain or melancholia, would continue and, within reasonable limits,

capability, and effectiveness. The crazy uncle in the attic that no one really wants to talk about here is that, while admittedly using very large amounts of opiates, he remained vital, talented, capable, and effective. I suspect that he fits my profile because if his brain functioned normally, and he was doing that much opium for any length of time, he would be slothful, disorganized, incompetent, dysfunctional, and probably dead. (All of my dead patients were people of unusual vitality, talent, capability, and effectiveness, too.)

One of these “addicts” was lost to us on a rainy Tennessee day in the spring of 1809. Meriwether Lewis was the greatest national hero of those times and the designated political heir to Thomas Jefferson. He was, presumptively, the sixth or seventh president of the United States. In historical terms, his suicide marked the passing of the torch from Jeffersonian to Jacksonian democracy and had a profound impact on the nature of our country. The continental vision he

## WHY BOTHER WITH DEFECTIVES THAT HAVE THE GALL TO SELF-MEDICATE?

the appropriate dosage. Something this simple would work for 90 percent of chronic pain patients as well as all of my dead patients, along with those for whom successful treatment was just another mile marker on hell’s highway. And it would relieve doctors of trying to figure out which patients are conning them, who has legitimate need, and who is going to get strung out and come back and bite them, which is what they evidently fear the most.

So the question becomes, why bother with defectives that have the gall to self-medicate? Well, take Limbaugh, for instance. Never mind his beliefs or character—we can all agree he demonstrates extraordinary vitality, talent,

shared with Jefferson was replaced by “manifest destiny” and the Trail of Tears. Conquest by force of arms replaced diplomacy and guile as the hallmark of American expansionism. Slavery ceased to be an abomination that we had to be lead out of and became, instead, a bargaining chip to be cynically used, always to the accrual of federal power. The loss of this junkie was transformational and, in the aftermath of his suicide, when his personal effects were sent home to Virginia and inventoried, there wasn’t any laudanum to be found. ■

*Jim Pittaway is a licensed psychotherapist. He resides and practices in Missoula, Mont.*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*]

### The Persistence of Memory

By Steve Sailer

EVER SINCE THE 1999 art-house hit "Being John Malkovich," major stars willing to forego their usual \$20 million paychecks for some elitist fun have turned to screenwriter Charlie Kaufman. George Clooney directed Kaufman's "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind," while Nicolas Cage was brilliant playing both the neurotic Kaufman and his blissful twin brother Donald in the hilarious "Adaptation."

Despite his popularity among celebrities, critics frequently charge that the ingenious Kaufman lacks true emotions. So he dims the wit wattage in his new romantic drama "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" even more than, say, Tom Stoppard did in his reputation-assuring "The Real Thing." "Eternal Sunshine" doesn't scintillate like "Adaptation," but it possesses mature depths.

Kaufman's new sobriety suits the notoriously Oscar-hungry comedy king Jim Carrey. As wonderful as Carrey is in mainstream laughs like "Bruce Almighty," he knows the Academy doesn't much respect funny performances, as we just saw with the droll Bill Murray and the flamboyant Johnny Depp losing the Best Actor award to Sean Penn and his "Mystic River" emote-a-thon.

Carrey's lust for official recognition probably stems from his inferiority

complex over his lack of education. (He dropped out of high school to tell jokes for a living.) More generally, stand-up comics like Carrey tend to be self-loathing and depressive. Even the exception that proves this rule, the bulletproof superman Bob Hope, made a running joke out of his pain at being repeatedly rejected by the Oscar voters.

Unfortunately for Carrey's dramatic ambitions, his comic competitive advantage originates in his remarkable muscle tone: his facial muscles can simply power their way from one exaggerated expression to another as fast as anyone in movie history. Carrey's attempt to harness his antic visage to Academy Award-style social-issue drama hit rock bottom with 2001's "The Majestic." Playing a blacklisted screenwriter in order to pander to Academy members' belief that the Hollywood Red Scare was the worst thing that ever happened in American history, Carrey gave a performance restrained to the point of catatonia.

In "Eternal Sunshine," however, he has largely solved his acting problems. He portrays a cautious introvert, but this time allows his character's sorrows to fully show on his expressive and appealing face. Three-time Oscar nominee Kate Winslet plays (in her words) "the Jim Carrey part" as his flighty, free-spirit girlfriend with hair dyed tangerine and blue.

Kaufman found his florid title in Alexander Pope's poem "Eloisa to Abelard." The famous medieval mistress, now cloistered in a nunnery, struggles with the anguish and joy of her memories of Abelard: "Of all affliction taught a lover yet / 'Tis sure the hardest science to forget!" In Kaufman's plot, Lacuna Inc. has invented an electronic brain zapper that erases recollections of lost loves. Trying to break up with Carrey painlessly, Winslet has Lacuna Inc. expunge all her memories of him.

He retaliates in kind. But once Lacuna's semi-competent technicians obliterate the sedated Carrey's memories of their ugly split, he falls in love with her again. The movie becomes a battle within his head as he fights to keep his remembrances of Winslet.

In summary, "Eternal Sunshine" sounds like one of those sci-fi social protest films made from Philip K. Dick stories, such as "Total Recall" or "Minority Report." Hollywood types adore making a Dick flick because it delivers the righteous rush of speaking truth to power combined with the comforting security of knowing that the omnipotent, sinister, and vengeful bureaucracy that you're bravely denouncing doesn't, technically, exist.

Smartly, Kaufman and "Eternal Sunshine's" director Michel Gondry, creator of Bjork's music videos, decided that Lacuna would instead be an unprepossessing small business renting a dingy office suite in the Outer Boroughs and staffed by dope-smoking lumpengeeks more concerned with their own subplots than their duties. Kaufman doesn't have to pound home the message that it's really not a good idea to obliterate your most intimate memories because it's plain that sensible folks stay clear. Lacuna barely limps along, surviving on the Christmas and St. Valentine's Day rushes. Carrey asks the doctor if there's any chance of brain damage. "Well, technically speaking, the procedure is brain damage," he replies in one of the film's few amusing lines.

"Eternal Sunshine" is too downbeat to be terribly enjoyable to watch. Yet, after you go home and think about it, you realize that Kaufman's craftsmanship is approaching Stoppard's level of mastery because his complex and initially puzzling script holds up superbly. ■

R for language, some drug use, and sexual content

## BOOKS

[*American Dynasty: Aristocracy, Fortune, and the Politics of Deceit in the House of Bush*. By Kevin Phillips. Viking Press, 397 pages]

### All in the Family

By Clark Stooksbury

ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL fictional depictions of a dynasty in recent decades is the Corleone family of Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*. The central theme of the book and film is the transfer of control of the family empire from Don Vito Corleone to his youngest son, Michael. A similar transfer occurs near the end of "The Godfather, Part III." In the final chapter of the film trilogy Michael Corleone anoints his nephew Vincent Mancini, the bastard son of his older brother, as the new head of the family. He instructs Mancini to call himself Vincent Corleone, whereupon the old Don's lieutenants come in and pay the new Don their respects.

The Bushes, one might say, are America's WASP Corleone family. They are a tight-knit clan that has passed an interest in several industries—from oil to politics—from generation to generation. With only an eight-year Arkansas interregnum, they managed to pass the nation's highest office, along with many family retainers and hangers-on, from father to son. And it doesn't stop there—several pundits have speculated over the possibility of the 2008 Republican nomination going to Florida governor and presidential younger brother Jeb Bush. The next generation offers the governor's son, George P. Bush, who spoke at the 2000 Republican convention.

The difference between the Bushes and Corleones is one of standing in the world. The Corleones were criminals. They built their dynasty on activities at

the margins of the legitimate world, primarily gambling. Vito Corleone lamented to his son Michael towards the end of the first film, "I never wanted this for you. ... I refused to be a fool dancing on a string held by all those big shots. ... But I thought that ... when it was your time ... you would be the one to hold the strings ..."

The Bush family holds the strings.

About the only thing that Kevin Phillips fails to do in *American Dynasty* is to compare the Bushes to an organized-crime family, fictional or otherwise. This omission is surely not out of any concern about offending President Bush or his supporters. For while not as vitriolic as some of the president's more partisan critics, Phillips presents a strongly negative look at the Bush family. He examines four generations of the Bushes and the Walkers (the family of the president's paternal grandmother) and notes the continuity of family involvement in the energy industry, the arms trade, intelligence, Yale University (and Skull and Bones), and politics. Naturally he places emphasis on the two Bushes (so far) who have become president.

The first President Bush took a peculiar path to the presidency. He failed in both of his attempts to win a U.S. Senate seat in Texas. After two terms in the House of Representatives, he punched his ticket in several appointed positions before deciding that he was ready for

ensure that American hostages remained in captivity until after the 1980 election so as to avoid giving President Carter a late-campaign boost that might have brought him victory. Phillips presents some evidence for this theory, but wavers—he wants to believe, but the evidence is not strong enough. He occasionally goes a little too far, such as when he compares the alleged taint on the 1980 election to George W. Bush's flaccid victory in 2000 and states that "the Bushes appear to be a family that approaches a presidential election as something to be won with a CIA manual, not earned with commitment to Lincolnian precepts of popular sovereignty." This ignores the two very strong victories that George H.W. Bush experienced in 1984 and 1988. It also ignores the reality that the post-election fracas in Florida owed as much to the incompetence of the Gore operation as it did to the craftiness of the Bush crowd.

The other scandal that Phillips investigates is called "Iraqgate." That refers to the role of the Reagan and Bush administrations in aiding Saddam in his aggressive war against Iran in the 1980s. The Bush administration was tilting towards Iraq and its vile dictator almost until the moment that Saddam sent his army into Kuwait in 1990. Phillips neatly summarizes the scandal, stating, "[B]y the end of the 1980s, the first U.S. mobi-

**THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION WAS TILTING TOWARDS IRAQ AND ITS VILE DICTATOR ALMOST UNTIL THE MOMENT THAT SADDAM SENT HIS ARMY INTO KUWAIT.**

the highest office in the land. It no doubt grated on him to be bested in the primaries by an aged matinee idol, but Ronald Reagan's coattails extended far enough to get George Bush to the White House in 1988.

Phillips explores two potentially calamitous scandals involving George H.W. Bush and the Middle East. One involves the so-called "October Surprise"—the alleged attempt by representatives of the Reagan-Bush campaign to

lization against Saddam Hussein and Iraq was only months away. President George H.W. Bush was busy ensuring \$1 billion in U.S. loan guarantees for Iraq and Saddam Hussein, declining to cut off the Iraqis from shared U.S. intelligence data, and disregarding Commerce Department advice to stop the flow of advanced equipment to Baghdad. A decade of covert involvement—and more than a little misjudgment—was about to come home to roost."



Phillips repeatedly invokes the phrase “crony capitalism” to describe the business dealings of the Bush family. George W. Bush’s record in the 1980s would not inspire any Horatio Alger stories. Fortunately for the president, as the London *Observer* stated, “Whenever he’s struck a dry well someone has always been willing to fill it with money for him.” Bush’s dealings with Harken Energy illustrate this: Harken bought out Spectrum 7, a failing company that Bush ran, in 1986. Harken gave him \$530,000 in stock, a directorship, and a consulting contract that left Bush with plenty of time to work on his father’s presidential campaign. A couple of years ago, the Democrats tried to make an insider-trading issue of his 1990 sale of the Harken stock because its value went down shortly after Bush sold it. But there must be no merit to the accusation as Phillips, who is willing to consider any conceivable charge against the Bushes, mentions it only in passing.

The company that may go down in history most closely tied to the president is Enron. According to Phillips, “What makes the Bush-Enron connection more significant is its dynastic aspect—the mutual support over two decades, two generations, and two presidencies.” He details how Ken Lay established a relationship with the Bushes in 1980 and how Lay went on to donate to various Bush campaigns.

George W. Bush came to the company’s aid even before he held elective office, when he made a phone call to Argentina’s Minister of Public Works on behalf of Enron within weeks of George H.W. Bush being elected president in 1988. The company received critical help at the sunset of the first Bush administration from Wendy Gramm, then-chair of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), as well as the wife of Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas). Enron requested a regulatory ruling to exclude energy derivative contracts and interest-rate swaps from CFTC oversight. With Gramm guiding the request, the commission, which was short two members, ruled in Enron’s favor on Jan-

uary 14, 1993. Shortly after leaving the Bush administration, Gramm was named to Enron’s board of directors.

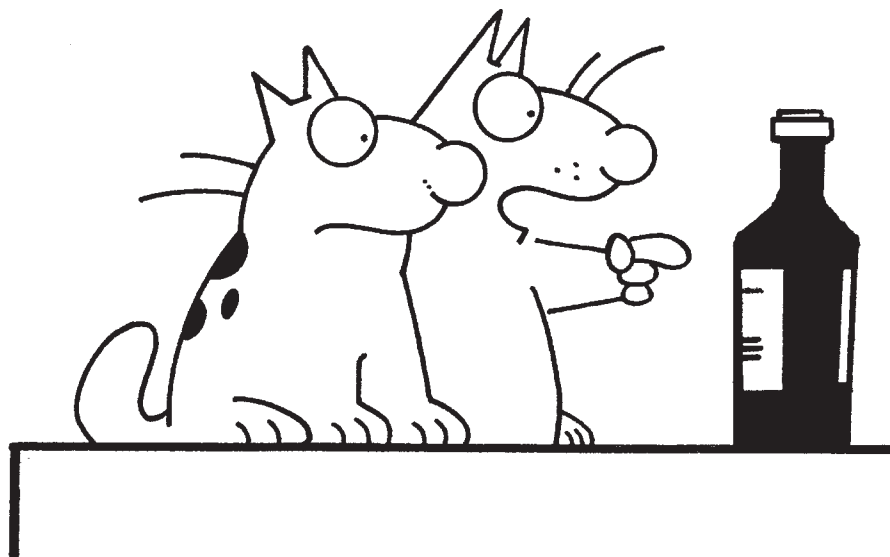
Phillips attributes Enron’s rise in the 1990s to crony capitalism. “Over the course of a single decade,” he states, “government agencies, both American and foreign, gave Enron \$7.2 billion in publicly funded financing for thirty-eight projects in twenty-nine countries.” In turn, the company was generous with politicians in both parties. George W. Bush’s Texas campaigns and inaugurals were funded by Enron and its executives. While the president was not implicated in the company’s collapse, Phillips quotes one investment banker who credits Bush administration failure to seize critical documents in 2001 with helping Enron executives hide and destroy incriminating evidence.

At times Phillips leans too heavily on the dynastic theme as an area of concern. He notes parallels between the father’s and son’s respective wars against Iraq, for example. But if the president were called George W. Smith, he would have still come under strong pressure from the neocons and others to invade Iraq and otherwise meddle in the Middle East. The fact that the last two Republican presidents are father and

son is among the least disturbing issues in their respective reigns. The first President Bush violated his “read my lips” pledge on taxes and signed expansive legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 1991 Civil Rights Act. His war with Iraq further embroiled the United States in the Middle Eastern quagmire, and the resulting occupation of Saudi Arabia helped inflame hatred of America in the Islamic world. The current president Bush has unleashed red ink as far as the eye can see, while signing both the No Child Left Behind Act and a prescription drug entitlement that will cost billions while still alienating its elderly constituency.

Phillips does find a parallel to the current Iraq War in a project unrelated to the Bush family, but still with a Texas connection: LBJ’s war in Vietnam. Johnson wanted to build a democracy in Southeast Asia and create a Tennessee-Valley-Authority-type project in the Mekong Valley. It was, as Phillips aptly states, “an adventure in nation building, a naïve preview of what his neoconservative heirs would promise the Tigris-Euphrates Valley nearly four decades later.” ■

*Clark Stooksbury has written for American Enterprise, Chronicles, and Liberty.*



“Tomatoes, corn syrup, vinegar, water, salt.  
See, there are no cats in catsup!”

*The War for Righteousness: [Progressive Christianity, the Great War, and the Rise of the Messianic Nation, Richard M. Gamble, ISI Books, 306 pages]*

## Onward, Christian Soldiers

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION'S war on Serbia served to remind us that many flower children are quite happy to make war after all. Whatever the real motivations for that mystifying decision—with the atrocity propaganda used to justify Bill Clinton's war now seeming more and more like the stockpiles of WMD in Iraq—it was explicitly carried out in the name of multiculturalism and diversity. Since the end of the Cold War, significant segments of the political Left have shown themselves every bit as disposed to violence as the neoconservatives they criticize, as long as the bombing can be justified in the saccharine language of a progressive-sounding cause.

What Richard Gamble has done in this important study is to show that this violent tradition of liberal righteousness extends much further into the past. *The War for Righteousness* chronicles the story of "progressive" Christian clergy, whom we might expect to be faithful to the Prince of Peace, but who instead overwhelmingly favored U.S. involvement in World War I. German militarism, which they viewed as responsible for the war, was in their eyes a scourge upon civilization that had to be eradicated; otherwise the international order would not be redeemed and ultimately set on the path of righteousness.

That is an important piece of history in itself. But Gamble also shows how these clergymen, caught up in their conviction that the U.S. was at least in some sense the savior of the world, applied to America the same language that Christians had traditionally applied to Christ. The Christian categories and

concepts that Social Gospel theologians had found malleable enough to make railroad regulation sound like a direct command of Christ were thus drafted into service in the conflict that had engulfed Europe. It thus became impossible for them to conceive of the war in measured, rational terms: to America they had assigned the righteousness of Christ, and there could be no compromise between Christ and Satan.

For many of the progressive Christians about whom Gamble writes, the main villain in the story of the Christian religion was St. Paul, who allegedly transformed the ethical religion of Jesus into the dogmatic system of confessional Christianity. They blamed an "individualistic" understanding of sin and salvation for what they saw as an insufficient social consciousness among the churches. In other words, Christians had been so preoccupied with working out their own salvation that they had neglected the social dimension of redemption.

These thinkers likewise criticized a transcendent view of the kingdom of God, suggesting instead that the kingdom of God would be achieved once

It was once the conventional wisdom that World War I marked the end of progressivism in America. But as economist and historian Murray N. Rothbard showed, the war in fact represented the culmination of progressivism. The progressive mentality that was so anxious for Americans to shed Jeffersonian cautions about big government was gratified by the domestic consequences of the war. Progressives, who overwhelmingly supported U.S. entry, were delighted at the opportunity both to extend state power through the massive economic planning that Woodrow Wilson adopted during the war and to exploit wartime patriotism to promote collectivism and the idea of service to the state as American values.

And that is just how progressive Christianity saw things as well. *Christian Century* happily predicted that "the right of the State to commandeer its able-bodied citizens for service will survive the war and will be greatly strengthened by it." Military training camps, they hoped, would become "permanent features of our national life," though they would train men for social service rather than for war.

*Christian Century* likewise spoke of the increasing acknowledgment of "the

THE PROGRESSIVE MENTALITY THAT WAS SO ANXIOUS FOR AMERICANS TO SHED JEFFERSONIAN CAUTIONS ABOUT BIG GOVERNMENT WAS GRATIFIED BY THE DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR.

"justice" had come to characterize human relations and social ills were at last eradicated. According to Rev. C. Arthur Lincoln, pastor of Buffalo's First Congregational Church, the church's goal was "not that men should become Christians and thus save their souls from hell but that men should become Christian and work hard to save the world from hell." It was with such thoughts in mind that progressive Christians threw themselves into the holy cause of World War I.

social sin of the German nation as a whole." Now that America understood the important progressive Christian concepts of social sin and guilt, it would "be incomparably easier to apply the principle of social sinning to groups and institutions within a single nation and to bring to bear upon them through the social gospel the super-personal forces of condemnation and destruction." The war had thus facilitated the application of the social gospel both domestically and internationally.

According to Gamble, progressive Christians viewed the war in Manichaean terms rather than as the morally ambiguous clash of imperial rivals that it was. "For some of the clergy," he explains, "the European War by 1916 had already assumed the character of a holy war." He quotes a seminary professor as saying that "pacifism does not mean passivity" and "does not renounce physical force." To remain neutral while Europe fought its own wars "may have been justifiable for our nation in its infancy; it is not now. The pacifists do not advocate any such peace policy as that. Their motive is not safety but service. They would have ours not a hermit nation but a humanitarian nation."

Gamble cites a number of figures who actually feared that the conflict might end prematurely, before righteousness had had the opportunity to triumph. One progressive Christian told a meeting of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, "We do not want the war stopped until peace can be established on the basis of justice. For myself I believe it must be fought out."

When in December 1916 Woodrow Wilson invited the major powers to state their war aims (as a prelude to possible talks aimed at an end to hostilities), 60 prominent clergymen signed a letter of rebuke to the president. "We are apt to forget," they wrote, "that there are conditions under which the mere stopping of warfare may bring a curse instead of a blessing. We need to be reminded that peace is the triumph of righteousness and not the mere sheathing of the sword."

The idiom of the progressive Christian even made its way into the halls of Congress on the eve of war. More than one congressman compared Christ's sacrifice for the sins of the world to the divine mission that the U.S. was about to undertake. A New York congressman declared that "Christ gave his life upon the cross that mankind might gain the Kingdom of Heaven, while to-night we shall solemnly decree the sublimest sacrifice ever made by a nation for the sal-

vation of humanity, the institution of world-wide liberty and freedom."

Gamble contends that in the name of bringing about perpetual peace, progressive clergy, through their crude application of Christian language and concepts to the war and its contending parties, helped to legitimize the 20th century's first total war. "They transported the war out of the sordid but understandable realm of national ambition, rivalry, and interests—where policies and goals can be debated and defined—into the rarified world of ideals, abstractions, and politicized theology, where dissent and limitations are moral failures or even heresies." He continues:

Thus, drawing upon the metaphors already habitual in the social gospel vocabulary of applied Christianity—crusades, suffering Christianity, vicarious wars of service, and so on—the progressive clergy consciously and deliberately provided the images of the United States, of Germany, and of the war's ultimate meaning that were indispensable in waging total war.

There is something unsettling, even obscene, about Christian clergymen embracing the savage mentality that

demands total war and unconditional surrender, when it should have been Christian clergymen above all who rejected these rotten fruits of the 20th century. But leftist clergy who had so eagerly conformed their religion to the spirit of the age, condemning as backward and foolish those who still believed the Christian faith had something to do with the Nicene Creed, turned out to be pushovers for the whole modern package.

In the progressive mindset, the war became the proving ground for Christians who possessed a social consciousness. Instead of focusing on the hereafter, the truly saved Christian was the one who offered himself here and now in service to his fellow man. "The best mark of a 'saved' man," wrote Rev. William P. Merrill in his book *Christian Internationalism*, "is not that he wants to go to heaven, but that he is willing to go to China, or to the battle-field in France, or to the slums of the city, or to the last dollar of his resources, or to the limit of his energy, to set forward the Kingdom of God." This is a particularly revealing remark, according to Gamble: "In Merrill's expansive ideal, there was apparently no distinction between personal redemption, social

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service, and enlistment in the United States Army."

Ecumenism is an inevitable byproduct when a pluralistic society goes to war, since it becomes urgent to emphasize that what unites the citizenry is more important than what divides them. Serving in the trenches alongside men of a variety of creeds and performing reciprocal acts of heroism can only have a similar effect.

Recognizing this, a *New York Morning Telegraph* editorial in 1918 observed that "loyalty to the flag swiftly is coming to be recognized as of equal or even greater virtue than fidelity to a church, a religious sect, or an ordained priesthood. ... Soldiers of Moses, soldiers of Christ, and soldiers of Democracy have become unified in the one Grand Army of Liberty, which is giving the only meaning worth while to ... 'The Church Militant.'" Thus was the United States

made something sacred, higher than all other fidelities and obligations.

Socialist Upton Sinclair predicted that the war would have a transforming effect upon the churches, spreading the progressive gospel at the expense of old-fashioned dogmatism. The churches would now be "inspired by things read, not in ancient Hebrew texts, but in the daily newspapers." The individual minister would, by his experience with trench warfare, emerge from the conflict "less the bigot and formalist forever after," thanks to his lesson in "co-operation and social solidarity." Sinclair looked forward to the emergence of a church "redeemed by the spirit of Brotherhood, the Church which we Socialists will join."

Richard Gamble has made an enormously important contribution not only to historical scholarship but also to our understanding of one of the ideological strains that has played so influential a role in our national life. The idiom of liberal Christianity, as Paul Gottfried points out in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt*, continues to suffuse our cultural life to this day, even if the fashionable causes with which the mainline churches now involve themselves would have disgusted the liberals of yesteryear.

Having lost whatever faith they may have had in the religion of the Fathers and the councils, or even of Luther and Calvin, so-called progressive Christians, full of self-congratulation over having emancipated themselves from the creeds and dogmas of the past, fell for the worst superstition and idolatry of all in their deification of the state. Although Gamble's lack of sympathy with liberal Christianity is clear enough, his sense of scholarly detachment prevents him from applying the word blasphemy to the works of progressive Christianity. The reviewer, however, is bound by no such restraint. ■

*Thomas E. Woods Jr., is the author of The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholic Intellectuals and the Progressive Era (Columbia University Press, forthcoming).*

[*The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage, Paul Elie, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 555 pages*]

## Four Roads to Rome

By Cicero Bruce

IN *The Life You Save May Be Your Own*, Paul Elie weaves together the historically parallel stories of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Walker Percy, and Flannery O'Connor. Truly these were four of the last century's most remarkable Catholic writers. The first, presently being considered for canonization as a saint, persisted in "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable," as Theodore Hesburgh once remarked. The second, an authentic countercultural rebel, famously retreated from mundane contemporaneity to live in cowed solitude. The third, a physician by nature and training, forewent a medical career to pen philosophical novels and essays diagnosing the ontological malaise of postwar America. The fourth, a latter-day seer, centered her vatic body of fiction round the ideas of sin and redemption through God's mysterious grace.

Day, born in 1897, recoiled from the sham and "ugliness of life in a world that professed to be Christian." Everywhere she looked finance capitalism had "dispossessed" the poor man, the advertisers had inflamed "his useless desires," the radio and cinema had "enslaved him." By the time she matriculated at the University of Illinois, Day fancied herself a Communist. In New York, where her family moved when she was 19, she wrote regularly for *The Call*, *The Masses*, and other stylish left-wing journals. She interviewed Leon Trotsky, propounded the anarchist views of Emma Goldman, and, in 1917, accompanied comrades to Madison Square Garden to celebrate the Bolshevik revolt.

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At length, however, Day found Marxist ideology unable to satisfy her hunger for something otherworldly to expound and dignify the human predicament. Hence, after a series of lovers and a rued abortion, she embarked upon a religious quest that led her by degrees to the Catholic Church, in which she was determined to have her next and only other child baptized, despite the protests of the baby's atheistic father, whom she lovingly renounced to receive the sacrament herself.

In the doctrine and dogma of Mother Kirk, Day discovered truths more real and palpable than any she had ever discerned in Communism. Moreover, Catholicism provided her with a supernatural warrant for her ardent concern for the needy. "What you do to the least of these," Christ said, "you do to me." Mindful of these words Day, with her inspiring counterpart, former French peasant and champion of Distributism Peter Maurin, established the *Catholic Worker*, a newspaper committed to social reform and world peace. They also opened and struggled to maintain a shelter for Manhattan's homeless.

Day's became an agitation not for the "natural rights" of man, but rather for the natural law of his Creator. Consequently, she vexed Americans of all political persuasions. She condemned the New Deal because it removed the ennobling burden of charity from the individual and placed it on Holy Mother State. Later, she published her disapproval of Hiroshima's bombing, decried the Spanish Civil War, and protested America's involvement in Vietnam. In short, she objected to every armed conflict of her time.

Merton, who questioned Day's unconditional pacifism, had his nativity in Prades, France. Eighteen years her junior, he was, like Day, a writer chiefly of autobiography. If her essential work is *The Long Loneliness*, his is *The Seven Storey Mountain*, a confession structurally reminiscent of Dante's *Purgatorio*.

Merton's mother, an artist and a native of New York, died of stomach

cancer before her son was six years old. Her husband, a New Zealand landscape painter with a passion for rural spaces and antiquated places, died ten years later of a brain tumor. His father's death left Merton uprooted and answerable to nobody but himself. At 16, he recollected, "I had become the complete twentieth century man."

After studying briefly at Cambridge, Merton enrolled at Columbia University, where he became painfully conscious of being ill-suited for modernity, even though the writers with whom he most identified—James Joyce, in particular—were central to literary modernism. As his alienation verged on despair, he searched about for something purposeful to embrace. Like Day, he, too, ran directly into the arms of God. What impelled Merton toward conversion was a chance encounter with Etienne Gilson's *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* in a Fifth Avenue bookstore. Gilson's study, observes Elie, gave

*Seven Storey Mountain*, which became a bestseller and a boon for monastic life in America.

In cultural contrast to Day and Merton, Percy and O'Connor began their lives in the American South. O'Connor was born in Savannah, Georgia, the year of the Scopes trial. It seems somehow appropriate that the author who claimed to "see" everything "from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy" should enter the world only a few months before William Jennings Bryan dared to uphold a state's right to exclude Darwinian theory from its schools' curricula and presumed to take the Absolute seriously. Bryan was as quixotic as O'Connor was eccentric—but neither was a fool. They were both prophetically aware that Christianity was under siege in America by a pervasive ideology hostile to notions of faith and revelation.

Notwithstanding his excessive and patronizing chiding of her undeniably retrograde personal views on race, Elie

DAY'S BECAME AN AGITATION NOT FOR THE "NATURAL RIGHTS" OF MAN, BUT RATHER FOR THE **NATURAL LAW OF HIS CREATOR**. CONSEQUENTLY, **SHE VEXED AMERICANS** OF ALL POLITICAL PERSUASIONS.

Merton his first "sense of God as a living reality, existing beyond all human approximations, and also of the claim to realism at the heart of the Catholic intellectual enterprise."

Upon completing his master's thesis on William Blake, Merton taught English, worked in a Harlem settlement house, and then decided to become a monk. In 1941, he traveled by train to the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani, a rustic monastery near Louisville, Kentucky, to be received into the Trappist order, a community known for its discipline of silence and reclusion. There he remained for the next 27 years, serving as master of students and novices, writing poetry and social criticism, feeling ambivalent about the commercial success of *The*

gives us a penetrating exegesis of O'Connor's novels and short-story collections. What recommends his analysis above all else is its painstaking concentration on what is really significant in O'Connor's symbolism. Indeed, Elie's focus is right where O'Connor said it ought to be—not on the "dead bodies," but on "the action of grace" in her characters' souls.

Still, Elie's discussion of O'Connor's work is not without its lacunae. It omits, for instance, the considerable influence of T. S. Eliot. Although he was neither a trained theologian nor a Roman Catholic, Eliot was nonetheless an imposing philosopher-poet from whose work O'Connor early and continually gained inspiration.

If O'Connor's stories can be seen as mirrored fictionalizations of *The Waste Land*, Percy's "diagnostic" novels can be read as variations on major themes in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoevsky's classic drew Percy to literature in the first place and became his permanent touchstone of genius. When he discovered it he read it "straight through over three or four days," writes Elie, "hardly putting it down to live his own life." At the time of this notable undertaking Percy was a high-school senior living in Greenville, Mississippi, where he and his brothers had been sent to be reared by their eminent cousin, poet and essayist William Alexander Percy. Elie accounts for Percy's absorption as follows: "His father had killed himself [as Percy's paternal grandfather had done], and here was a book about four brothers who wanted to kill their father; his mother had died [suicidally, most believed] in a car crash, and here was a book about the question of whether there can be a God in a world in which innocent people suffer."

Like Day and Merton, Percy gradually made his way down the proverbial road to Rome; O'Connor had been born there. Why did Percy become a Catholic? Many and sundry are the answers given by his biographers. Percy himself answered the

question simply: "I believe that what the Catholic Church proposes is true." But there is more to it than that. After ultimately rejecting science as the measure of man, Percy realized his art lacked what Elie describes as "an objective standard that lay outside himself." In Catholicism, specifically in its anthropology, Percy ascertained the thing he wanted.

In 1964, O'Connor, the first of Elie's subjects to die, lost a prolonged and excruciating battle to lupus. Percy had come to esteem her above all contemporary writers, referring to her as "my dear friend." On the occasion of her death, Merton deemed her a modern Sophocles, praising "all the truth and all the craft with which she shows man's fall and his dishonor." What shocks today's reader are not the depictions of violence and the grotesque in O'Connor's fiction. Tellingly, what shocks, says Elie, are "the religious faith" and "the religious challenge" informing every aspect of her work, letters and essays included.

Merton and Percy concluded their own earthly sojourns within the next 26 years. The former, arguably the 20th century's most influential Catholic author, was accidentally electrocuted in 1968, while attending an ecumenical conference of Buddhist and Christian

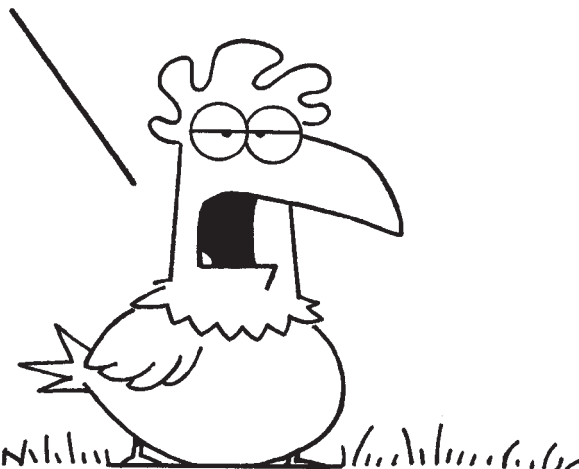
monks in Bangkok. In 1990, Percy succumbed to cancer of the prostate. But, like Merton, he never succumbed to the century's disordered zeitgeist. Against it, Percy affirmed "that man is more than an organism in an environment, more than an integrated personality, more than a mature and creative individual, as the phrase goes. He is a wayfarer and a pilgrim."

Day, the longest-lived in Elie's history, waxed more and more conservative during the two decades leading up to her own death in 1980. She opposed the sexual revolution of the sixties as strongly as she regretted her part in the women's liberation movement of the twenties. The sixties were, in her words, "a complete rebellion against authority, natural and supernatural, even against the body and its needs, its natural functions of child bearing." Her most important comment on the selfishness of liberalism was made during a 1972 appearance on *60 Minutes*, when she informed Mike Wallace and the nation that abortion is a grave iniquity.

He who believes in one God, in one Lord, in one holy catholic and apostolic Church may be suspicious of a biographer of Christians who feels compelled to end his book with sentences such as those we find in Elie's concluding paragraphs: "We are all skeptics now, believers and unbelievers alike. There is no one true faith, evident at all times and places. Every religion is one among many." Suspect though they are, Elie's unfortunate postmodern ramblings should not cause us to repudiate the otherwise instructive study leading up to them. We must find wisdom where we can, even in the midst of moral absurdity. In *The Life You Save May Be Your Own*, Day, Merton, Walker, and O'Connor—all paradigms of character—speak for themselves through the teller of their tale, who is to be commended for a story extraordinarily well told, though certainly not for his relativistic confusion. ■

Cicero Bruce is associate professor of English at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas.

**THE SKY IS NOT FALLING! THAT'S JUST A CROCK OF PROPAGANDA FROM A BUNCH OF LEFT WING ENVIRONMENTALIST WACKOS!**



Chicken Little, Age 40.

# A Nation of Victims



What in God's name is going on in the United States? Has a reverse Taliban taken over? America's cultural *mujahedin* have launched a *jihad* over

an old sacred cause, sexual harassment, all because the literary world's answer to Paris Hilton, the preposterous self-publicist Naomi Wolf, wrote that her Yale professor Harold Bloom put his pudgy hand on her pudgier thigh 20 years ago. This drivel appeared in *New York* magazine, whose main function is to list restaurants and penile-enlargement medical centers. Heaven help us.

Having done nothing about it two decades ago, Wolf is now getting back by publicly humiliating a sick and distinguished man. She and *New York* magazine are engaging in character assassination. Had the magazine any decency, it could have run her story, reported by one of its writers, along with Yale's and Bloom's responses to it. Instead, it ran a long cover story consisting of nothing but Wolf's unsupported accusations. What I found incredible was that her stomach seems peculiarly prone to upset at the best of times. She was "sick with excitement" before the prof arrived, then found herself "vomiting in shock" before his departure. Give this pest some Alka-Seltzer and hope she jumps in a freezing lake. Clearly life has been good to Wolf, but a little publicity never hurt.

When it comes to sexual harassment, the mullahs show no pity to transgressors, real or imagined. The week of the Wolf story, the *New York Times* ran a front-pager under the alarming headline "Military Women Reporting Rapes by U.S. Soldiers." The hysterical tone was palpable from the start. "The United States military is facing the gravest accusations of sexual misconduct in

years, with dozens of servicewomen in the Persian Gulf area and elsewhere saying they were sexually assaulted or raped by fellow troops." What I'd like to know is what women are doing in the military in the first place.

And it gets better. Katie Hnida, a former place-kicker for the University of Colorado, recently announced that she had been sexually harassed by the team and even raped by one of her teammates. These charges came about after she had been cut by the coach, Gary Barnett. Barnett declared, no doubt truthfully, "It was obvious Katie was not very good. She was awful. You know what guys do? They respect your ability. You can be 90 years old, but if you can go out and play, they'll respect you. Katie was not only a girl, she was terrible." Harsh words, but unfortunately the truth is often quite harsh. For saying this, however, the university president immediately put Barnett on paid leave pending an investigation. The *New York Times* was not satisfied. They wanted more than just Barnett's firing. Somebody had to "clean up the university's mess of a football program," shrieked an editorial. The "separate jock world" had to be eliminated once and for all. A *Times* sports reporter called for "something drastic ... like shutting down the program to investigate the root causes of the dreadful events that have been alleged." These priests of intolerance didn't even bother to pretend that a woman's accusation against a man is not the last word on the matter. What I'd like to know yet again is, what was a woman

doing on a male football team? And since when is a coach fired for saying someone is a dreadful player? If the charges are proved, throw the book at the perpetrators, but not until.

Banning and eliminating comes naturally to these liberal spiritual brothers of Osama bin Laden. Our mullahs have declared a *fatwa* on Mel Gibson's film. Abe Foxman is leading the *jihad* against the cross, just as liberal Catholic scholars are assisting in slandering the great Pope Pius XII. Personally, I find Foxman's cries of wolf (pun intended) laughable.

The *New Republic's* Leon Wieseltier, refers to the Gospels as "way beyond the pale of decency." I find Wieseltier beyond the pale. When our Lord Jesus was depicted as having sexual thoughts while dying on the cross in "The Last Temptation of Christ," few voices were raised in protest. When some untalented pig photographed a crucifix in a jar of urine, even fewer voices were raised. Art and all that. Now that Mel Gibson has shown things the way they were, Foxman wants to censor. The neocons forced an agenda on President Bush that will most likely make him a one-term president. Their dual agenda has Uncle Sam's interests taking second place after those of Israel. Now people like Foxman want to ban a Christian film made by a devout Catholic like Gibson. What I'd like to know is how that could happen in a Christian country.

And lastly, the *New York Times* did not like Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader taking part in the 2000 presidential debates. It's Bush and Gore and no one else, according to the *Times*. Who do the *Times* think they are? The hard-liners in Iran? Tell all these American mullahs to go to hell and take their political correctness with them. ■